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# **THE PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION OF THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP**

**Hong Wang B.Sc M.Sc**

This document is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glamorgan for the degree of Master of Philosophy .

The research has been carried out at the Department of Property and Development Studies , The University of Glamorgan , in collaboration with 1992 Garden Festival Wales Ltd.

November 1992

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who, in a remote country, have always encouraged and supported my study for this degree.

CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH

This is to certify that, except where specific reference to other investigation is made, the work described is the result of the investigation of the candidate.

H. Wang

H. Wang  
(Candidate)

10th NOV. 1992

(Date)

P.J. Leverton

P.J. Leverton  
(Director of Studies)

10th Nov. 1992.

(Date)

G. Prescott

G. Prescott  
(Supervisor)

10th November 1992

(Date)

R. Delpak

R. Delpak  
(Supervisor)

10th November 1992

(Date)



## DECLARATION

This is to declare that either this thesis, nor any part of it, has been submitted, or is being currently submitted, in candidature for any degree at any other Academic Institution.

*Hong Wang*  
-----

H. Wang  
(Candidate)

*10th November 1992*  
-----

(Date)

## ABSTRACT

Composed of a bloc of "urban villages", the South Wales Valleys have undergone continuous physical and economic decline in the last 60-70 years, due to the shrinkage of their backbone industries of coal mining and steel. The regeneration of the Valleys is therefore on the agenda of the government. The latest and the most comprehensive approach - the Valleys Programme - was launched in 1988, seeking to tackle the full range of physical, economic, environmental and social problems. Under this initiative, a series of urban regeneration projects, including the 1992 National Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale, have been promoted at different localities through partnership.

The present research aims to study the Valleys regeneration by focusing on an examination of four projects representing three major partnership models: the Independent Organisation, the Contractual Joint Venture and the Informal Consortium. In assessing the impact of the projects, the emphasis is on physical and economic regeneration of a "property-led" nature.

The Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale is first examined. Considerable attention is paid to this project as it constitutes a "flagship" scheme managed by an Independent Organisation. The four previously-staged Garden Festivals in the U.K. are examined to draw lessons from them. Based on the findings, the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival is studied, focusing on its special features, its anticipated benefits and the measures to maximise its long-term benefits.

Alternative approaches to urban regeneration in the Valleys are also studied. South Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration is selected as an example of a Contractual Joint Venture initiative. Rhondda Heritage Park and Abertillery Town Centre Renewal present contrasting examples of an Informal Consortium. Comparisons of the different approaches are conducted with an emphasis on project characteristics and partnership features.

Partnership is important to the success of the regeneration of the Valleys. In this research, the strengths and weaknesses of the three partnership models are identified. It has also been found that partnership at a higher level, that is, between different projects, would be valuable, and a proposal is made accordingly for promoting such a partnership.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS: DECLINE AND REGENERATION

The South Wales Valleys for the past 60 years or so have experienced major economic, environmental and social problems. Traditionally the major sources of employment for the residential population were within the steel and coal industries until they went into a progressive decline. This began in the early 1920's and has continued up to the present. It is due to a number of factors including the lost competitiveness of the South Wales coalfield in the world market, the steel industry's move to new flat sites close to the sea, and world-wide industrial structural changes.

As a result, whereas in the early 1920's one man in every three was employed in the coal industry, today it is less than one in a hundred. Further, in 1971, about 70,000 were employed in the steel industry in South Wales. Since then over 50,000 of these jobs have disappeared, and only less than 3,000 remain in the Valleys. In 1988, in industrial South Wales, only 2 per cent of the working age population was employed in coal and steel. In comparison, in the early 1920's, nearly half the male working population of Wales was associated with these industries (Welsh Office, 1988).

This continuous decline has led to severe problems for the

Valleys: high levels of unemployment, vast areas of derelict land and slag heaps, out-dated infrastructure, and poor living standards, reflected in poor quality housing, health conditions and education.

In 1988, the male unemployment rate in the Valleys was 18.9%, compared with the U.K. average of 10.8% (Morgan and Price 1992). Whereas the U.K. average percentage of homes without inside toilets was 2.8%, the figure for the Valleys was 9.2%. Nearly 29% of school-leavers in the Valleys had no formal qualifications, almost three times the U.K. average of 10% (Dobson,1988)

The Valleys have some of the highest illness-rates in the country. Death-rates from heart disease are the highest in Europe (Dobson,1987).

The regeneration of the Valleys has been on the agenda of successive governments. Earlier efforts mainly concentrated on land reclamation. Derelict land, in the form of spoil heaps and redundant buildings, left by the traditional industries, has been counter-productive in attracting new industries and investment. Large-scale reclamation was triggered by the Aberfan disaster in 1966, and most of the earlier work concentrated on colliery dereliction (Welsh Office,1986). By the mid-seventies its scope had been widened to include dereliction on railway, factory and metalliferous waste land. The Welsh Development Agency

(WDA) came into being in 1976 with responsibility for grant-aiding and co-ordinating reclamation. By 1986, it had approved the reclamation of 1,900 hectares in Gwent, Mid and West Glamorgan at a cost of £62 million. In addition, a wide variety of small scale schemes to improve the environment had been approved. In the 1986 "Initiative for the Valleys", the Welsh Office made an extra £2 million capital allocation available for expenditure on housing, and £1 million for Urban Programme for 1986/87 (Welsh Office,1986).

The latest and the most significant Initiative - "The Valleys: A Programme for the People" - was launched in June 1988, with the aim to "improve significantly the prosperity of the Valleys of South Wales and the well being of the people who live in them; to give people a new confidence in the future of their Valleys as places in which to live and work and to instil in people elsewhere a new perception of the area as a place worth visiting and investing in." (Welsh Office,1988). This is a comprehensive programme seeking to tackle the full range of physical, economic, environmental and social problems.

The Programme was originally scheduled for three years. With a total sum of £500 million allocation, it promotes about 50 schemes covering a wide range of problems as evidenced by the main headings of the Valleys Programme document: Creating a New Economy, Education and Training, Tourism, Leisure and the Arts, Roads, Environment, Voluntary

Effort, Health and Social Services and Housing.

In December 1990, David Hunt, the Secretary of State for Wales, announced an extension of the Valleys Programme for a further two years to March 1993. In so doing, he gave added prominence to another aim - the promotion of partnership. This was concerned not only with the relationship between central and local government, the public and private sectors, and employers and unions, but most importantly, "partnership with the people", in short, between all the parties engaged in the regeneration of the Valleys (Welsh Office, 1990). A further £300 million was allocated to continue the progress of the schemes set out in the original Valleys Programme.

## **1.2 THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS: DIVERSITY AND COMPLEXITY**

The Valleys, whilst sharing the fundamentals of "inner city" problems such as high unemployment, social poverty and bad health, are nevertheless different from other typical inner city areas in terms of their geographical extent and settlement patterns (Pavitt 1990; Tanner 1989). As a region, the Valleys have a common past and they have common problems of education, health, housing, unemployment etc. This is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 2. However, more prominent are the diversity and complexity of the Valleys.

The area recognised as the Valleys, extends 40 miles east to west and about 20 miles from north to south, containing a population of about 700,000 people - not much smaller than Liverpool and larger than Sheffield (Pavitt,1990). Nevertheless, instead of being a single urban conurbation, the administration of the Valleys involves sixteen District Councils and five County Councils (Appendix I).

There are more than twenty valleys in the area, from the world-renowned Rhondda to small, sparsely populated side valleys. Every valley has distinct characteristics. One community may only be a few miles from another, but they are often separated by hills. Traditionally, there was little contact between the various valley communities which were very self-contained. All the employment and most local shopping, educational and social facilities were within the village itself. The settlement in the Valleys is unusual. Most of the towns and villages came into existence in the 19th century in the rush to exploit the coalfield. The Valleys contain a number of small towns, usually of between 20,000 to 40,000 people, but the typical settlement is the former pit-head village of perhaps 1,000 to 3,000 inhabitants. The area contains literally hundreds of such settlements, strung out along the valley floor (Tanner,1989).

Furthermore, there are long recognised differences between the "valley mouths", the "valley hearts" and the "valley heads". There are also marked differences between the

eastern, central and western valleys, between the deep mining and shallow mining areas (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 1988).

Certain types of communities usually share common problems and provide opportunities for particular types of action to improve economic, physical, environmental and social conditions, and The Institute of Welsh Affairs in its report "The South Wales Valleys: An Agenda for Action" ( Institute of Welsh Affairs, 1988) categorises the Valley communities into the following groups:

a. **Valley Mouth Towns:** major population settlements at or near the valley mouths, such as Pontypool and Cwmbran, Caerphilly and Pontypridd and Neath.

b. **Valley Head Towns:** major population settlements at the Heads of the Valleys, including Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare, and Ebbw Vale and Tredegar.

c. **Linear Villages:** on main roads of open Valleys, such as Treorchy, and in the narrow central Valleys, such as the Rhondda Fach.

d. **Small Communities Near Arterial Routes:** such as Cwmparc, Aberfan and Tonyrefail.

e. **Communities remote from arterial routes:** such as



Glyncorrwg, Blaengarw and Abergwynfi.

f. **Countryside Areas in the Valleys:** many of which have been reclaimed, often with extensive afforestation.

Based on the assessment of strengths and weaknesses, the key issues of the "typology" of the Valley communities have been identified, as shown in Fig.1.1.

The Welsh Office recognises this diversity and complexity and believes that, in the regeneration of the Valleys, "a key component of success must be local initiative and the self-confidence that flow from it" (Welsh Office,1986). In the Valleys Programme, a variety of regeneration project was promoted, each tackling the particular problems in selected areas.

### **1.3 EXISTING ASSESSMENT OF THE REGENERATION OF THE VALLEYS**

As pointed out in Section 1.1, the regeneration of the Valleys has been under way for more than 20 years, with the early projects concentrating mainly on land reclamation and the recent ones being more comprehensive, particularly the Valleys Initiative. The first phase of the £800 million Valleys Initiative has come to an end and it is now in its extended two years period. Since most of the regeneration projects would take a while to achieve full effect, a thorough evaluation of the regeneration is difficult to make at this early stage.

# FIG 1.1 AREAS AND ISSUES

| Valleys Typology                      | Issues                                      |   |   |   |  |                                   |            |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|------------|
|                                       | MANUFACTURING BASE NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED | SERVICE SECTOR THREATENED OR UNDERDEVELOPED | SMALL COMMUNITIES WITH NO ECONOMIC BASE | POOR QUALITY HOUSING AND LACK OF CHOICE | DERELICT LAND AND RUN-DOWN URBAN AREAS | OUTDATED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE | POOR IMAGE |
| Valley Mouth Towns                    | ■   | ■   |   | ■                                       | ■                                      |                                   |            |
| Valley Head Towns                     | ■   | ■   |   | ■                                       | ■                                      | ■                                 | ■          |
| Linear Villages                       | ■   | ■   | ■                                       | ■                                       | ■                                      | ■                                 | ■          |
| Small Communities Nr. Arterial Routes | ■   | ■   | ■                                       | ■                                       | ■                                      | ■                                 | ■          |
| 'Dead-End' Valley Communities         | ■   | ■   | ■                                       | ■                                       | ■                                      | ■                                 | ■          |
| Valley Countryside                    |   |   |   |   | ■                                      |                                   | ■          |

Source: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 1988

In contrast to the large body of literature assessing the achievements of inner city policies, urban regeneration in the Valleys has been much less extensively investigated.

The Welsh Office's own assessment is that most of the targets set by the Valleys Initiative for the first 3 years have been met, achievements of the Programme for the Valleys from the time it was launched in 1988 up to June 1992 include: 2.6m sq. ft. of new industrial floorspace created; over 7,000 homes improved through enveloping and repair schemes; over 2,000 acres of derelict land cleared by the Welsh Development Agency (WDA); nearly £700m. of additional private sector investment secured promising the safeguarding or creation of 24,000 jobs; over 300 new factory units built; seven arts centres renovated at a total cost of nearly £5m.; the promotion of a festival - "The Valleys Live 92" - that will celebrate this major investment in the arts; the encouragement of five community revival strategies inspired and run by local communities themselves; plus investment in health care, social services, housing, training, enterprise, urban renewal and other projects (Welsh Office, 1992).

As pointed out by Morgan (1992), "The first phase of the Valleys Programme, running from 1988 to 1991, is now over. Since there is to be no independent evaluation of the programme the Valleys' communities have to rely on the Welsh Office's own record of what has been achieved to date, a

wholly unsatisfactory situation in which the Welsh Office is both judge and jury." He continues, "In the absence of further information, it is impossible to offer a full evaluation of this Welsh Office assessment".

A special investigation by the Western Mail in June 1992 concluded that "The Welsh Office's Valleys Initiative has done little more than scratch the surface of the problems. Neither crisis (education and training) can be solved without a massive commitment of Government funding" (Western Mail Comment, 1992b).

"Yet it has laid important foundations which must be built on without delay, or its £780 million schemes will be largely wasted ... the WDA has spearheaded the work. By far its greatest task has been the speeding up of its land reclamation programme... the WDA has attracted valuable investment by building £65 million worth of factory premises during the years of the initiative to date ... the Agency's improvements to the centres of Valleys towns and villages have lifted confidence in such communities as Porth and Abertillery." (Western Mail Comment, 1992c).

Clearly, it has generally been agreed that the Valleys Initiative has made some progress towards the regeneration of the Valleys. Indeed, given the £500 million investment, the main criticism of the Initiative has been on insufficient funding. This issue has been raised ever

since the beginning of the Initiative. A brief look at the title of articles published in the National and professional press at the time shows this: "Valleys Scheme Called "rag bag"" (Hymas,1988) "Valleys Initiative Needs More Cash, TUC Told" (Jones,1988) "Initiative gets mixed welcome in Hillsides" (Anon,1988b).

Leaving aside the argument of whether or not adequate funding from the government has been directed into the Valleys in the Initiative, the assessment of what has been achieved and how cost-effective the projects are have been largely left untouched. Such an assessment may be difficult, because as Morgan (1992) suggests, "the aims of the Valleys Programme are not easy to define, other than in the most general terms", and "few of the aims are easily measured". He continues, "Furthermore, no records were maintained at the district level, and it is almost impossible to attribute changes in unemployment to the effect of the initiative, because other factors - macro-economic performance and national economic policy etc. are often the key determinants of what happens".

It is therefore appropriate at this stage, to conduct some detailed investigation into the effectiveness of individual projects or types of projects and their "fitness" for the local conditions where they have been promoted. For example, the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival, a flagship scheme of urban regeneration in the Valleys within the Initiative, ran from May to October 1992. Theoretically, Ebbw Vale should

have benefited from the experiences of the previous Garden Festivals. Nevertheless, the physical circumstances of Ebbw Vale are distinctively different, being located at the head of the Valleys rather than in an urban centre as was the case in each of the previous Garden Festivals. Questions such as how to benefit more from the experience of the previous Festivals, and what can be realistically expected from this Garden Festival, need careful study.

On the other hand, projects differ in their characteristics and partnership patterns. These need to be identified and compared to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses and to draw lessons to improve their performance.

The evaluation of regeneration projects should address not only issues relating to the operation of project management (economy and efficiency) but should also accurately identify the scale, nature and extent of projects impacts (effectiveness). Evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency is dependent upon the degree to which the direct and indirect linkage between initiatives and their social and economic consequences can be justified. A central concern is the extent to which projects have achieved their aims and objectives, and the extent to which funding has induced additional investment (Gregory and Martin, 1988).

The evaluation of whether an regeneration initiative is successful is a difficult task with problems such as those

identified by Coulson (1988): most initiatives have multiple objectives, many not easily measurable and likely to vary in importance overtime, there is thus often no easy agreement on the criteria that define "success" or "failure"; there may be disagreement about the time scale over which initiatives are evaluated; indirect effects, such as the effects of a project on areas beyond its aimed locality, are difficult to evaluate; the problem of "deadweight" is difficult to establish. "Deadweight" means benefits are not attributable to the regeneration initiatives, ie., the benefits would have been achieved even without the initiative.

A number of writers have outlined "checklists" for the evaluation of short and long term effects of regeneration schemes (Johnson,1988; Bozeat,1988; Askew,1991). For example, Johnson suggests that the following impacts should be identified: the originally anticipated impacts; the out-turn impacts and the projected impacts. A comparison between the out-turn impacts and the projected impacts and the originally anticipated impacts helps to assess to what extent the scheme has fulfilled its objectives.

Bozeat suggested five sets of criteria against which urban regeneration projects can be assessed. The criteria are in terms of the contribution of the projects to: a. UK national economic benefits; b. regional and local economic benefits; c. environmental and planning objectives; d. social objectives and e. "good practice" in implementation.

In evaluating the effects of regeneration schemes in the South Wales Valleys, the following aspects can be suggested:

a. **economic impacts** (both short and long term), including attraction of inward investment, diversification of local economic base and short term economic benefits such as tourists expenditure;

b. **employment impacts** (both short and long term), including creation of both permanent and short term employment opportunities for local people;

c. **environmental impact** (mainly short term), including derelict land reclamation, old building renovation and/or new usage and plantation at sites;

d. **physical impact** (mainly short term), including provision or improvement on infrastructure such as roads, passenger railway services, car parks etc.;

e. **image improvement** (both short and long term), including the improvement on the image of the locality of the project and the Valleys as a whole, the publicity and popularity of the events and the areas both of short and long term nature.



#### 1.4 DEFINING "REGENERATION"

Despite the widespread use of the term as part of British urban policy since the late 1970's, a satisfactory definition of regeneration remains elusive; general acceptance still does not appear to exist. As the chief executive of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation has been quoted as saying, "when the UDC's were set up, they were told that their aim was "regeneration", but nobody defined precisely what that meant" (Lamb,1992).

However, Couch (1990) has suggested that urban regeneration is a process " in which the state or local community is seeking to bring back investment, employment and consumption and enhance the quality of life within an urban area".

More specifically, the concept of "property-led urban regeneration" has been characterised by some researchers (Clegg,1988; Healey,1991; Healey et al,1992). For example, Healey (1991) states:

"The objective of the strategy is to achieve local economic growth by providing the physical structures and locales appropriate for the new kinds of economic activity which will replace the old manufacturing industries... The strategy is targeted at transforming urban space to make it more appropriate for the hoped-for activity mix which will provide a base for a new self-sustaining economic future for

older industrial areas. This justifies the emphasis on land and property development."

The present study is concerned with the physical and economic regeneration of the South Wales Valleys. Regeneration is taken in this study to mean the process in which the government and local community are seeking to tackle physical and economic problems resulting from the decline of the traditional industries, and to revitalise the local economy thereby creating prospects for prosperity. The focus is on property-led regeneration in which the public sector prepares land (eg. by reclamation), with some basic infrastructure provision, for further industrial, commercial and/or other developments by the public and/or the private sector. The physical regeneration is by means of land reclamation, environmental improvement, infrastructural and industrial unit provision or improvement, etc., whereas the economic regeneration is by means of attracting investment, promoting industrial development and diversifying local economy etc..

### 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is devoted to a brief review of literature on the British urban policies, with focus on the urban regeneration policies since late 1970s when the current Conservative Government went into power.

Inner city decline has occurred in recent decades in the

U.K. as well as throughout almost all the developed world, mainly as a result of structural changes in the world economy (Robson,1988; The Institution of Civil Engineers,1988). Inner city areas have therefore encountered serious physical, economic, environmental and social problems, reflected in, for example, large areas of derelict land, high unemployment rate, environmental degradation and social unrest. As a consequence, urban regeneration has assumed an important place on the agenda of central government (Cabinet Office,1988; National Audit Office,1990).

The emphases of urban policy of successive government have been varied since the 1950s (Gibson and Longstaff,1982; Robson,1988; Lawless,1989): the focus on the built environment and environmental quality in the 1950s and 1960s was shifted to a social emphasis in the late 1960s, an institutional emphasis in the mid-1970s, and an economic emphasis by the late 1970s. The economic emphasis has remained dominant since then.

Compatible with the Conservative Government's ideological commitment to privatisation, the primary thrust of urban policy, since the late 1970s, has been urban regeneration through private sector property development. Based on this philosophy, considerable public money has been spent in an attempt to lever private investment, and public-private partnership has been encouraged (Audit Commission,1989;

Barnekov, Boyle and Rich,1989; Healey,1991).

As noted in Section 1.3, there is by now a large body of literature assessing the inner city policies. It has identified the range and depth of the problems of the inner city and examined the effects of policies on urban development (Robson,1988; The Institution of Civil Engineers,1988; Audit Commission,1989; Cabinet Office,1989; The Royal Town Planning Institute,1990; Smith,1991, Healey, Davoudi, O'Toole, Tavsanoglu and Usher,1992; Fox-Przeworski, Goddard and Jong,1991; Morison,1987; Barnekov, Boyle and Rich,1989, National Audit Office,1990, Hausner et al,1987; Stewart,1987).

The current national urban regeneration policy has three key characteristics (Solesbury,1990): it has an economic focus, concentrating on supply-side measures, with the leading role for the private sector. This is clearly expressed in the Government's 1988 policy statement, Action for Cities. The objectives of the policy are broader than the economic. However, when analysed in terms of expenditure, the primacy of the economic emphasis is obvious, and the dominance of property objectives within this emerges clearly (Healey,1991). In this policy, the economic changes are seen as central and the right point to break into the problem. In short, this approach may be characterised as "get the urban economy working again and social and environmental improvements will follow".

The essence of the supply-side approach of the policy is to stimulate growth, not by demand management, but by improvements in the supply of land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship - the classic factors of production (Solesbury,1990).

The third characteristic of the policy, the emphasis on the role of private sector, leads to the encouragement and direct sponsorship of public-private partnerships by both central government and local authorities. The enthusiasm for partnership was based in large part on the frequently cited achievements of these arrangements in the US cities (Barnekov, Boyle and Rich,1989; Hambleton,1991). The British interpretation of the public-private partnership was loosely based on the premise that the objectives of urban policy could be best achieved by combining scarce public resources with the much larger reserves of investment capital at the disposal of private institutions. According to Solesbury (1990), on the following five scores property has much to contribute to urban regeneration:

- a. investment in property helps maintain public health;
- b. property contributes to productive efficiency;
- c. the building stock of a place may be an important resource of tourism;
- d. the state of property influences on the confidence of both the financier and the owner-occupier; and
- e. the construction sector is important to the economy.

Healey (1991) examines the effect of property development on urban regeneration and concludes that, whilst the production and management of the built environment is never an unimportant issue, its significance for localising forms of economic development is likely to be highly variable in time and place. Each urban region may need to determine how far to emphasise property-led urban regeneration and to invent its own strategies and institutional arrangements for policy implementation. The way property development activity has varied over time during the 1980s, and how the patterns of activities have varied between development sectors and between and within urban regions, are examined by Deddis and McGreal (1988), Nabarro and Key (1992), Law (1992), Usher and Davoudi (1992).

There is no such thing as a single set of measures that can bring about successful urban economic regeneration for all cities. Rather, a diverse combination of organisational and institutional factors are necessary, since the central issue is whether local environment can be adapted to structure transformation of the wider economy and the requirement of new economic activities. Fox-Przeworski et al. (1991) identify four key factors in the design of successful urban economic regeneration programmes:

- a. the recognition of problems and opportunities;
- b. the delineation of objectives and strategies;
- c. the identification of actors and institutions; and

d. the development of appropriate methods and priorities.

Drawing on the experiences of the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit, Davies (1992) emphasises the value of regeneration projects that are area-based, locally led, partnership-oriented, and tackle the three related objectives of people, place and business prosperity. He summarised the following lessons from regeneration in the past ten years:

- a. greater flexibility on the rules governing the use of local authorities' capital receipts;
- b. policy should be more sophisticated and more flexible, encouraging diversity and customised approaches to regeneration, including small scale and local innovation;
- c. policy should meet local need and avoid the problems of "short termism";
- d. the partnership approach and community-based development should be encouraged;
- e. Greater emphasis should be placed on people-based and qualitative aspect in balance with physical and commercial development.

As far as partnership is concerned, the original concept of partnership in the U.K. was that between central and local government, which was an attempt to overcome the cumbersome bureaucratic structure of multi-layered organisations at different spatial scales (Parkinson and Wilks, 1983; Kitchen, 1986; Robson, 1988). This was superseded by the

partnership between the public and private sectors. This was one of the most significant shifts in the direction of urban policy in the 1980s. The change reflects central government's concern to open the way for a renewed involvement of the private sector in the regeneration of cities by attracting private investment and an enterprise culture to areas in which the private sectors had long showed a reluctance to develop interest. Brindley, Rydin and Stoker (1989) have characterised this approach as "market-led" planning.

The public-private partnerships have involved collaboration between, on one hand, the private sector with central and (some) local governments, especially through the use of Urban Development Grant and, more recently, the private sector alone with central government through the use of Urban Renewal Grant; and on the other hand, housing associations and local authorities with private developers through the use of Derelict Land Grant (Robson,1988; Law,1988; Howes,1988).

Various aspects of partnership arrangements, such as the property-led partnership arrangements in Scotland, structures for development partnerships in Yorkshire, and the partnership in flagship projects, are examined, respectively, by Law (1988), Boyle (1989), Harding (1992), Lloyd (1992) and Bianchini et al. (1992).

Smith (1992) identified the following prerequisites for



successful partnership:

- a. a common goal for all parties;
- b. mutual understanding;
- c. commitment; and
- d. competence.

Whilst the private sector may be expected to invest in a project promoted by a partnership, its main objective is still profit. Therefore, the flexibility of public support in leveraging private sector finance must reflect the risk and profitability of a project (Saunders, 1992). On the other hand, according to Brown (1992), in order to make a partnership last and succeed in a flagship project, the public sector must take on development risk and there must be some flexibility in the arrangement. Carley (1991) concluded that success depended on a local culture which is receptive to the idea of co-operation and is willing to invest the necessary resources, although Hambleton (1991) has emphasised that such co-operation is not automatic; the "extraordinary barriers of prejudice" which have built up over several decades have to be overcome.

## 1.6 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In the light of the national policy emphasis on urban regeneration through partnership, the present study aims to:

- a. produce a comparative study of the project characteristics and partnership patterns of selected, typical urban regeneration projects in the Valleys, and
- b. provide an in-depth study of how to achieve the maximum benefits from the individual projects (or type of projects) and how to co-ordinate different projects so as to generate the maximum impact on the regeneration of the Valleys.

A variety of types of projects has been initiated in order to best suit the diversity and complexity of the Valleys conditions. Four projects representing different characteristics and partnership patterns are included in the study (see Fig.1.2):

(1) the Independent Organisation Project - 1992 Ebbw Vale Garden Festival;

(2) the Contractual Joint Venture Project - Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration; and

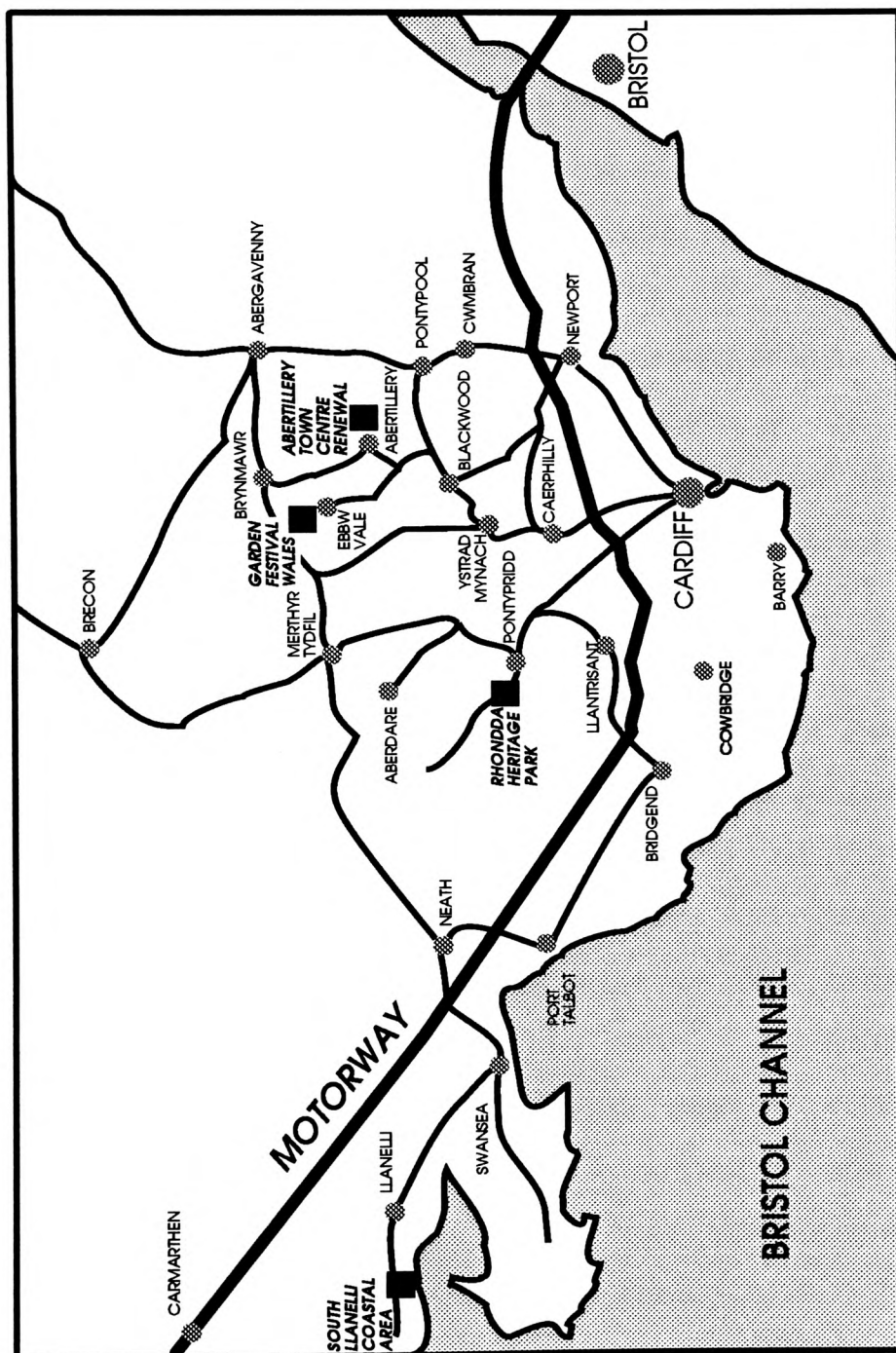
(3) the Informal Consortium Projects -

(a) Abertillery Town Centre Renewal and

(b) Rhondda Heritage Park.

As "early" projects, they have already delivered some results which makes an examination of their performances

Fig. 1.2 LOCATIONS OF THE PROJECTS STUDIED



possible.

The need for a degree of maturity in the projects studied has dictated the choice of one scheme from just outside the recognised Valleys area. Although much of the Borough of Llanelli falls within the boundary of the Valleys Initiative, the town itself is excluded, but otherwise displays most of the same characteristics of the decline of Industrial South Wales. Examples of this model of partnership arrangement have been established within the "true" Valleys only since the commencement of this research in 1990. It is too soon to be in a position to assess their achievements, hence the longer-established Llanelli project has been selected.

Among the four projects, the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival has been given particular emphasis. The justification for this is that the Festival is not only one of the biggest regeneration projects in the Valleys in terms of the resources committed, but also because it has been an event of national importance within the U.K. In addition, the experiences of its four predecessors can be studied it to assess the major issues of how to maximise the long-term benefits and assess to what extent can the Garden Festival play a role in the Valleys regeneration.

The **objectives** of this study are summarised as follows:

a. to identify the different types of the Valleys

regeneration projects in terms of project characteristics, and partnership patterns; and to examine the selected projects representing the typical types;

b. to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each of the different types of project in the context of the prevailing local conditions;

c. to assess the possible impact of each project on the regeneration of the Valleys and to propose measures to maximise the benefits; and in the case of the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival, to study the experiences of the previous Garden Festivals and draw lessons from which the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival may benefit;

d. to compare and contrast the projects in order to identify the extent to which, and under what circumstances, each different project can play a role in regeneration and influence the physical and economic development of the area; and also in order to establish the prospects for successful policies and partnerships to promote prosperous economic development in the Valleys.

The research methodology was designed to suit the investigative nature of the study. A review of literature was first carried out to establish the existence (or otherwise) of similar studies and to collect preliminary information. Few similar academic studies on the

regeneration of the South Wales Valleys were found initially, with the exception of the thorough long-term study of the clearance and redevelopment from dereliction of the Lower Swansea Valley (Bromley and Humphrys, 1979), which has been recognised world wide as a classic regeneration project and has been the subject of several published studies. During the course of the research, results of studies which were of interest were published, to which reference was made in this research. This literature study also helped select the projects for detailed investigation and pointed to sources for further information.

In the investigation of individual projects, a semi-structured interview format was preferred to questionnaires. The interviews were important to collect detailed and in-depth information about the projects. Officials of the Welsh Office and the WDA, local government officers, project officers and representatives of private sector agencies were interviewed with prepared questions and areas of data or information to collect.

Typically, a brief telephone interview was conducted first, and followed by a face to face interview of one to two hours duration on an agreed date. Greater reliance on telephone interviews was necessitated in some cases by the distance involved. Some unpublished material was often provided in the interview which generally proved to be very helpful. In some cases it was necessary to arrange for a second or third

interview when, later in the study, further information or discussion was considered necessary.

Another benefit of such interviews, particularly with the project officers, was that a guided "sight-seeing" tour was often undertaken, which provided the opportunity to obtain first hand information on the physical condition of the project area and the changes that had been brought about.

The purpose of the interviews is mainly to obtain relevant information and data with regard to the research and particularly the project officers and government officials, about the successes and problems of the projects, were considered in the study, in the context of the actual information and data and the critical assessment available in the literature.

Although the research concentrated on eliciting information and opinion from the organisations concerned in promoting and managing each of the case study projects, the representatives of each of the agencies involved in a particular project were interviewed independently of each other. This allowed the data to be corroborated and their views to be compared and contrasted.

An additional source would have been the residential and business community in each of the case study areas. Their opinions could be valuable as they are affected by the

proposals and outcomes of each project. A limitation of this study is that this information was not collected in a systematic way, although some evidence about the response of the community to the Rhondda Heritage Park was gathered by informal interview with local residents.

So far, out of this research, four papers have been published in British academic or professional journals, and one in a Chinese academic journal. One paper was presented in a seminar on the regeneration of the Valleys held at the (then) Polytechnic of Wales in November 1991. Details of publications are in Appendix II.

#### **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH**

The initial plan for the research project included a detailed assessment of the regeneration of the Valleys by establishing a series of economic and social indicators to reflect the changes brought about by the regeneration. However, after an early investigation, it was realised that this would be difficult, because (a): the Welsh Office did not monitor the Valleys regeneration at district or even county level, so detailed data are not available; and (b): most of the projects promoted in the Valleys Programme were still at an early stage and their impacts were not yet clear. Therefore, the research has been concentrated on case studies of different projects involving different partnership models, with the aims stated in Section 1.6.



## CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND TO THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

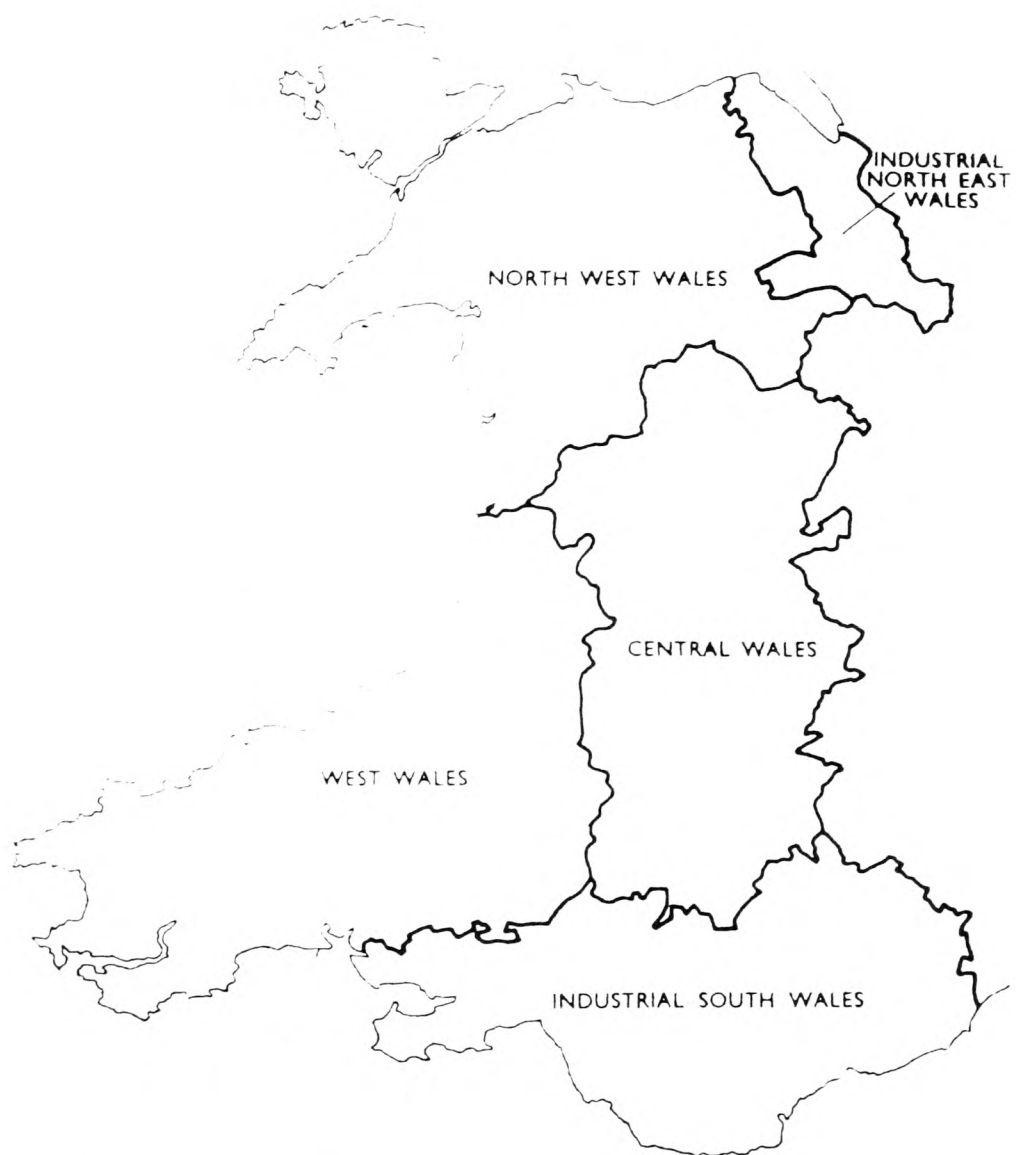
As a geographical and historical entity, the Valleys have been well-documented. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise a number of facets of the Valleys to provide a context within which efforts of regeneration have taken place.

### 2.2 THE VALLEYS: A GEOGRAPHICAL VIEW

Wales is some 8,000 square miles in size and contains 2.8 million people, ie. 5% of the U.K. population. Based on the characteristics of economic structure, Wales can be divided into five regions as shown in Fig.2.1 (Welsh Office,1967). Some of these regions have common problems. For instance, industrial South Wales and North-East Wales are both closely related to the coal and steel industries, while the other three regions are predominantly agricultural.

Though covering less than a quarter of Wales, industrial South Wales housed nearly 70 percent of the population and almost three quarters of total employees (Welsh Office,1967). It comprises two blocs: the coastal area and the Valleys. The coastal area contains the largest cities in Wales (Cardiff, Swansea and Newport) whereas the Valleys are primarily coalfield areas. The cities and the ports on the coast and the industrial communities in the Valleys were

Fig.2.1 Regions in Wales



Source: Welsh Office, 1967

largely created together. Each developed as an essential part of the same economic community, providing services that were entirely inter-dependent. The ports were built to ship the coal and metal products of the Valleys to the world, and the cities to provide the commercial, social and entertainment facilities which served the whole area.

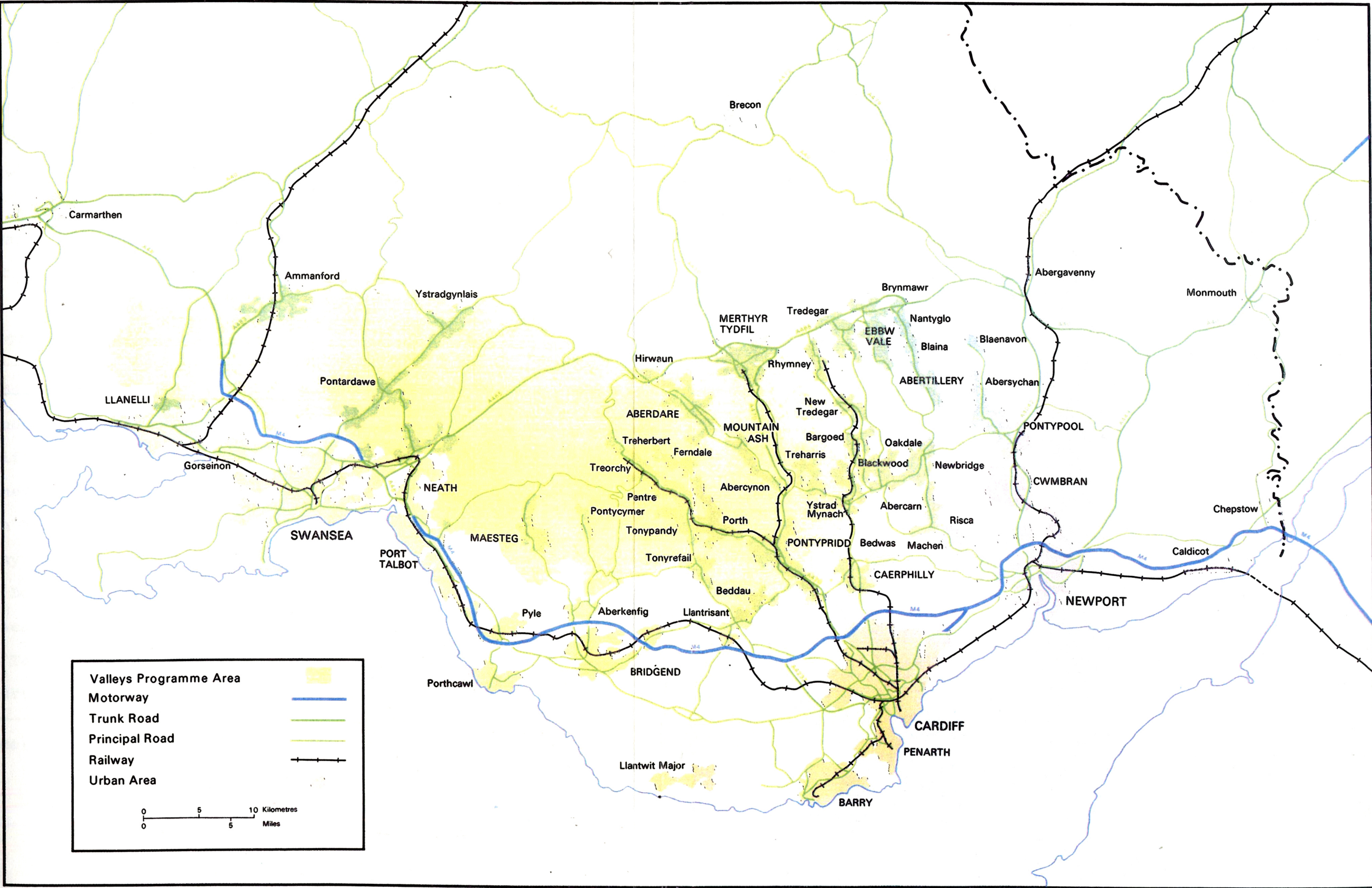
The Valleys, though generally recognised as a distinct geographical and social entity in Wales, have no administrative unity. There is no official definition of the Valleys boundary. The Institute of Welsh Affairs defines the Valleys as the "area of the South Wales coalfield... bounded in the east by Cwmbran, Pontypool and the Afon Llwyd valley in Gwent; in the north by the Heads of the Valleys Road; in the west by the Swansea valley; and in the South by the M4." ( Institute of Welsh Affairs,1988). This is roughly the same as the Welsh Office's definition of the Valleys in its Valleys Initiative (Fig.2.2).

The Valleys covered by the Welsh Office's Valleys Programme contain part or whole of sixteen District Councils and five County Councils (Appendix I). However, most of the area is within the boundary of Gwent, Mid Glamorgan and West Glamorgan. The County of Dyfed also has a small part included in the Valleys Initiative area, ie, the Amman and Gwendraeth Valleys, whilst the upper swansea Valley around Ystradgynlais lies in Powys.

Mid Glamorgan has some 60% of the Valleys population, and

Fig. 2.2

VALLEYS PROGRAMME AREA



Source: Welsh office

also some of the most acute social and economic problems in the Valleys (Morgan,1992). The core of the Valleys, ie Cynon, Merthyr, Rhondda and Rhymney is all within Mid Glamorgan. Five of the six districts within Mid Glamorgan (Cynon, Merthyr, Rhondda, Rhymney and Ogwr ) are among the ten most deprived districts in Wales. According to Morgan (1992), the Welsh Office gives each ward a deprivation score and when these are added together for the district level they present a league table of the most deprived districts in Wales - a league in which the highest score means the worst deprivation.

#### The Ten Most Deprived Districts in Wales

---

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Rhondda Borough Council         | 108.00 |
| Blaenau Gwent Borough Council   | 100.93 |
| Cardiff City Council            | 86.42  |
| Rhymney Valley District Council | 78.28  |
| Cynon Valley Borough Council    | 61.85  |
| Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council  | 61.35  |
| Ogwr Borough Council            | 60.48  |
| Swansea City Council            | 58.09  |
| Port Talbot Borough Council     | 49.81  |
| Newport Borough Council         | 47.43  |

---

Source: Morgan, 1992

### 2.3 THE VALLEYS: A HISTORICAL VIEW

The current problems of the Valleys, such as high unemployment, sub-standard housing, poor landscape, low labour skill, etc., are largely rooted in the coal and steel industries and their associated growth and decline. Coal in particular, shaped virtually every aspect of life in the Valleys, including the creation of its towns and villages, its housing and landscape and its economy, health, politics, culture and community spirit (Tanner, 1989).

The development of the Valleys may be divided into three stages. The first, for about one hundred years up to 1860, saw the exploitation of limited iron ore and other mineral resources to meet demands for iron for munitions and rails. The second, from 1860 to 1920, saw the Valleys develop into one of the most buoyant growth centres for industrial production in the world. Prosperity came with the boom in the coal and steel industries in the area. Then, from the early 1920's onwards, during the third stage, coal and steel entered into a period of decline, as coal export outlets began to disappear. This trend has continued up to the present day and the problems facing the Valleys now are largely the consequence of this decline (Humphrys 1972; Welsh Office 1967).

### 2.3.1 Development up to the 1860's

The origins of development began around 1759 within the iron industry when the first furnace was opened in Merthyr Tydfil (Humphrys,1972). By 1801 this town had become the centre of the industrial revolution within South Wales, its population having increased to 7,700, it previously having been a parish of scattered form. It continued to develop up to 1861 by which time the population had increased to 49,749.

Progress was facilitated by improvements in transport links between the Valleys and the ports which developed along the South Wales coast at Newport, Cardiff and Swansea. Both roads and canals were rapidly constructed.

During the early part of the 19th century, the iron industry expanded considerably in response to domestic and overseas demand from both civil and military uses. (ibid.).

In terms of output the industry reached its peak in 1875 when 970,727 tons were produced by 164 furnaces then in use throughout South Wales (ibid.). From this point onwards, the iron industry went into decline, primarily as a result of Bessemer's method for making cheap steel in bulk. The change-over to this method further increased the activities of the South Wales ports since the ore required for this process had to be imported from Spain, the local variety having been found to be too phosphoric. Another consequence

of this importation was the eventual relocation of the valley-based steel industries to coastal locations to reduce transportation costs.

### 2.3.2 Development from the 1860's to the 1920's

From the 1860's onwards, South Wales industry was increasingly dominated by the production of steel, tin-plate and coal.

A depression within the iron industry as witnessed by a Royal Commission in 1885/6, was recognised as due to backward technology and competition from the USA and Germany. South Wales was able to overcome this by adapting to the Siemens process of open-hearth steel manufacturing. (Humphrys,1972). Welsh steel was thus given new life and by the First World War a far greater quantity of steel was being produced by the Siemens process than by the Bessemer method.

From 1880, the tin-plate industry showed considerable scope for expansion, being centred in Western Glamorgan and Eastern Carmarthenshire (Morgan,1988). In 1891, tin-plate production reached 586,000 tons, and in 1912 a record peak of 848,000 tons was achieved.

The coal industry emerged in the 1840's and there was a consequent shift of economic activity towards exporting coal. From 1896 onwards, Welsh coal exports far exceeded



demand for domestic use. In the early 1870's, 16 million tons per annum were produced, but by 1891 this figure had increased to 30 million and reached a peak of 56.8 million tons in 1913. This final figure represented 19.7% of the entire coal production for the whole of Britain. Thirty million tons of Welsh coal was being exported, which itself was a third of the entire world export in coals of all types (ibid.).

As result of this rapid expansion, a number of new communities were created, the largest being within the Rhondda Valleys. The Rhondda became the focal point for the coal industry within the Valleys and between 1885 and 1913 coal output from there increased by 73% from over 5,500,000 tons to over 9,600,000. This figure represented more than a sixth of the total output of the South Wales coalfield (Humphrys,1972). During the same period the number of miners within the Rhondda rose from 25,000 to 41,000. Rhondda coal led the Welsh and British economies to reach new peaks of expansive growth.

The impact of this "coal rush" was a huge increase in the population of the Valley regions as shown by the following figures for the Rhondda between 1871 and 1911 (Hopkins).

### Population of the Rhondda Valleys 1871 - 1911

---

| Year | Males  | Females | Total   |
|------|--------|---------|---------|
| 1871 | *      | *       | 23,950  |
| 1881 | 30,877 | 24,755  | 55,632  |
| 1891 | 50,174 | 38,177  | 88,351  |
| 1901 | 62,315 | 51,420  | 113,735 |
| 1911 | 83,209 | 69,572  | 152,781 |

---

This expansion had a severe environmental impact on the Valleys which were eventually characterised by black coal tips, dereliction and river pollution.

During the First World War, high production levels were maintained. In February 1917, coal mining came under government control and as the War effort heightened the need to ensure sufficient supplies increased (Lewis,1963). Steel production was also enhanced by war-time demands as it adapted traditional output to producing weapons of war. This more than maintained the market for steel and further stimulated the demand for coking coal. The high levels of employment was therefore maintained.

#### 2.3.3 Decline since 1920's

Since 1920, the coal and steel industries in the South Wales Valleys have undergone progressive decline. This was mainly

due to the following causes (Morgan,1988):

- a. a general shrinkage in demand;
- b. development of alternative fuels such as oil;
- c. the economies achieved in the use of coal;
- d. loss of markets as a result of the exploitation of the domestic coal resources of former customers and the shift to alternative suppliers.

In addition, the failure of the coal owners, during the inter war period, to introduce the mechanisation which was revolutionising coal mining abroad had also contributed to the decline.

Although a degree of prosperity returned to South Wales from the end of Second World War to the mid fifties, a period when West Germany and Japan were rebuilding their economies, the general trend of decline was never reversed. Despite the government's efforts in helping to establish new industries, the unemployment problem had never been resolved satisfactorily.

Between 1921 and 1940, 430,000 people left Wales, the majority being from the Valleys (Morgan,1988). The censuses of 1951, 1961 and 1971 showed a movement of people from the

Valleys to the coastal towns and cities of South Wales.

#### Miners in Wales

---

|      |                        |
|------|------------------------|
| 1960 | 106,000                |
| 1970 | 60,000                 |
| 1979 | 30,000                 |
| 1988 | 7,000 (in South Wales) |

---

#### Pits and Miners in Rhondda

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| Year | Pits | Miners |
|------|------|--------|
| 1885 | *    | 25,000 |
| 1913 | 66   | 41,000 |
| 1927 | *    | 39,177 |
| 1936 | *    | 19,873 |
| 1958 | 12   | *      |
| 1970 | 3    | *      |
| now  | 0    | 0      |

---

Source: Morgan, 1988

The number of miners in Wales decreased sharply: in 1960 there were still 106,000 but this had fallen to 30,000 by 1979. The total number of miners in South Wales was only 7,000 in 1988, whereas in 1920 there had been over 270,000 employed in the industry. The peak number of miners in the Rhondda area alone was 41,000, whereas today there are none (Morgan, 1988).

When the coal industry was nationalised in 1947 there were 214 pits in South Wales. Thirty years later there were 42, and in 1988 there were only 3 (Welsh Office, 1988). Following a recent government announcement, only one pit is likely to be left in South Wales by 1993.

Employment in the steel industry has also sharply declined. In 1971 it employed about 70,000 in South Wales, whereas by 1988, the figure has fallen to 20,000 (ibid.).

The dramatic decline of the traditional industries have resulted in extremely high unemployment in the Valleys, and this has inevitably led to a full spectrum of economic, social and environmental problems.

#### **2.4 THE VALLEYS' INNER CITY PROBLEMS**

As has been shown above, the problems of the Valleys stem from the progressive decline of the past six or seven decades. They have grown now to a scale and depth that appears to defy any hope of a quick resolution or even a significant overall improvement. Despite the considerable efforts made by successive governments to promote regeneration, particularly after the £500 million first phase of the Valleys Initiative has been completed, the Valleys still retain many problems.

**a. weak economy, high unemployment and low earnings**

The rapid decline of the traditional industries in the Valleys has left a weak local economy. A clear indicator of this is the low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - a measure of output. In fact, Wales as a whole, is below the U.K. average: in 1989, for example, GDP per head in Wales was only 83.6% of the U.K. average. The Valleys are even worse. For example, GDP in Mid Glamorgan, which contributes to some 60% of the Valleys population, is the lowest in the U.K. and the gap is widening (Mid Glamorgan County Council, 1992).

The low GDP reflects a number of structural weaknesses in the economy, including a below-average number of firms, a low value output and a modest turnover for the majority of the firms. As a result, the capacity for indigenous growth is limited.

In recent years, the Valleys economy has improved significantly in some aspects, attracting a large amount of inward investment. However, the growth of new industries has not matched the decline of the traditional ones, and the unemployment rates remain high. Male unemployment rates are listed below (Morgan and Price, 1992):

Male Unemployment Rate (%) (April,1992)

|      | Valleys | Wales | U.K. |
|------|---------|-------|------|
| 1988 | 18.9    | 13.5  | 10.8 |
| 1990 | 13.1    | 8.4   | 7.4  |
| 1992 | 18.7    | 13.1  | 13.0 |

In the Central Valley districts, such as Aberdare, Merthyr, Rhymney, Pontypridd and Rhondda, the rate is even higher today, varying between 19-22%.

For those who are employed, earnings are low in the Valleys compared with the rest of the U.K.. The relative weekly earning in Wales (weekly earning in Wales/in England) is as follows (Morgan and Price,1992):

Weekly earning in Wales/in England

|                          | 1980  | 1991  |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| Male manual worker       | 99.9% | 94.1% |
| Male non-manual worker   | 93.4% | 86.5% |
| Female manual worker     | 99.1% | 95.5% |
| Female non-manual worker | 94.1% | 88.8% |

The average pay rates in Mid Glamorgan are some £27.50 a

week below the national level for males (Mid Glamorgan County Council,1992), and the average pay in the Valleys is little more than 80% of the U.K. norm (Morgan,1992).

High unemployment and low earnings have resulted in considerably below-average household income in the Valleys. The average household income per person in Mid Glamorgan, for example, is only three-quarters of the U.K. average (Mid Glamorgan County Council,1992):

Average household income per person in Mid Glamorgan

---

|                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Income             | £5,024 (75% U.K. average) |
| <hr/>              |                           |
| Disposable income* | £4,122 (78% U.K. average) |

---

\* i.e. excluding tax, National Insurance etc.

The average household income per head in Mid Glamorgan is the lowest in the U.K.. This is not only cause for concern in itself, but contributes to further social and economic problems, since low income households have little to spend on goods and services. This reduces the incentive for investment in the local economy, whilst ill health, poor housing and low education attainment are also closely associated with poverty.



**b. ill health, poor housing and low education attainment**

Associated with low household incomes and the legacy of heavy industry, are high levels of ill health and disability among the population in the Valleys.

Valleys babies are often born weighing less than those in better-off parts of Britain, which can reduce their chances of survival. This is often due to their mothers continuing to smoke during pregnancy or suffering from high blood pressure (Payton,1992). The average lifespan for the male population in the Valleys is below 70 years, compared with the average for Wales and U.K. of 70.69 and 71.80 respectively. In Mid Glamorgan, about one in five deaths is "premature" (i.e. under 65 years old) (Mid Glamorgan County Council,1992).

Levels of disability are also high. In Mid Glamorgan for example, there were 44,000 people registered physically disabled in 1989, plus a possible 11,000 people who are disabled but unregistered (ibid.).

Ill health contributes to disadvantage and deprivation. In 1986, some 28,400 people in Mid Glamorgan (i.e. 5.26% of the total population of 539,600) were unable to work because of long-term sickness or disability, by far the highest proportion in Wales. Responsibility for caring for the sick and disabled is increasingly falling on "the community" - most commonly female relatives (ibid.). The poor health

conditions in the Valleys are to a larger or lesser extent, attributable to poor housing conditions. With damp and draughty housing, the rate of respiratory diseases like bronchitis and asthma are 37 per cent higher than other parts of Wales (Basini,1992).

In the Valleys about one in five houses is more than a century old, a much higher proportion than the rest of Britain. Many houses still lack bathrooms or indoor toilets (Dobson,1988):

Percentage of houses without inside toilets

---

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| Valleys | 9.2% |
| Wales   | 5.2% |
| U.K.    | 2.8% |

---

This is the price paid for the boom years of the coal industry. With the unprecedented growth during the "coal rush", row after row of hurriedly-built houses came into being, many of which were built without the most basic amenities. The situation has been exacerbated by the fact that many of the new housing estates built in the 1950's and '60s to replace the squalid houses of the past have themselves become slum in the space of a few decades. Some are already ripe for demolition (Basini,1992).

In Mid Glamorgan one in ten houses is deemed unfit for human

habitation and the figure rises to 16.4% in Cynon Valley and 15.3% in the Rhondda (Morgan and Price,1992).

Homeowners tend to be low income earners who cannot afford to pay for expensive renovations. Any demolition or abandoning of the houses would create scars in the community, inducing an air of dereliction and further depressing local property values.

Valleys school accommodation is also poor. Basini (1992) claims that schools in the Valleys are in a much worse state of disrepair than in other parts of Wales and are lacking in books and equipment. This no doubt contributes to a higher proportion of Valleys pupils leaving school without any qualifications (Dobson,1988):

Percentage of school leavers with no formal qualification

---

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Valleys | 28.6% |
| Wales   | 16.6% |
| U.K.    | 10.0% |

---

Furthermore, fewer than the national average pass two or more "A" levels. Only a third of the pupils are likely to stay on at school after 16. Sixteen-year-olds in Mid Glamorgan consistently achieve the worst GCSE results in Wales, closely followed by those in Gwent and West Glamorgan. The three counties which comprise most of the Valleys also fail to achieve when it comes to A-levels, with

a much smaller proportion of children taking and passing the higher exams compared to their counterparts elsewhere in Wales (Clarke,1992).

|             | Percentage of school leavers<br>with no GCSE | Percentage of School<br>leavers with 2 or<br>more A-levels |
|-------------|--|--|
| Mid Glam.   | 24   | 13   |
| Gwent       | 15   | 12   |
| West Glam.  | 14   | 12   |
| Gwynedd     | 10   | 19   |
| Clywd       | 7  | 20   |
| Powys       | 7  | 20   |
| Dyfed       | 14   | 22   |
| South Glam. | 15   | 22   |

Source: Welsh Office Statistics 1991

### c. out-migration, imbalanced population structure and low skill levels

Given the problems of high unemployment, low earnings, poor housing, etc., it is not surprising that many of the young and talented move out of the Valleys, leaving behind a higher proportion of the old, the less skilled and the unemployed. Between 1981 - 91, 16,600 have emigrated from the Valleys, whilst a further 10,000 are expected to leave by the year 2000. The majority of those leaving are under 45. This out-migration threatens the future of services

such as shops, schools, buses, public telephones etc. (Western Mail Comment,1992a).

The migration of the younger, more skilled people has led to a fundamental imbalance in the population structure of the Valleys. Mid Glamorgan, for example, has considerably fewer professionals (3.5%) as a percentage of the working age people actually in full-time employment. Furthermore, 60% of the districts have a higher than national average of elderly people (Morgan and Price,1992). This high dependency ratio acts as a further barrier to women participating in the workforce, exacerbating an already abnormally low female activity rate.

In addition to this imbalanced population structure, the Valleys have a workforce of relatively low skill levels. In 1987, the largest proportion (38.6%) of the Valleys workforce fell into the semi-skilled/unskilled manual category, with 13.6% into the managers and professionals, and a mere 1.9% into the scientists, engineers and technologists (Morgan and Price,1992).

A report of the Department of Employment suggests that the Valleys are in danger of becoming trapped in a "vicious circle" of skills shortages, threatening their ability to attract high quality job creation projects. A lack of quality investment will hit any hope of raising skill and income levels (Jones,1991b).

#### **d. dereliction, pollution and poor image**

The Valleys have long been regarded by outsiders as a rugged, dirty and scarred industrial area of inaccessibility. Although some 21,000 acres of derelict land have been reclaimed in South Wales, since 1966, the Valleys have been unable to remove this image. As reported in the Western Mail, "the image of the Valleys remains one of the grim, depressing towns and villages with more than their share of pollution. The spoil heaps may have gone, and the bulk of the derelict land reclaimed, but decades of abuse, heavy industry and the dumping of waste and debris cannot be easily eradicated." (Vickerman,1992).

## CHAPTER 3 REGENERATION OF THE SOUTH WALES VALLEYS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

With the continuous economic decline in the Valleys since 1920's, efforts have been made by successive governments to tackle the problems it has caused. As early as in the 1930's government funds were set up to attract and support factories in the region. This was mainly aimed at alleviating the acute problems of high unemployment.

Since the Aberfan Disaster in 1966, land reclamation has been given great emphasis. With the setting up of the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) in 1976, the regeneration of the Valleys began to be promoted and co-ordinated. Since then the WDA has played an important role in the regeneration of the Valleys, and its role in promoting regeneration is discussed first in this chapter.

Although many regeneration schemes and initiatives have been undertaken, the Valleys Programme, launched in 1988 and extended in 1990, has been by far the most comprehensive approach in respect to the regeneration of the Valleys area as a whole. With a total investment of £800 million, it promotes a large number of projects, aiming to tackle the full range of physical, environmental, economic and social problems. In this chapter, the regeneration of the Valleys is discussed in separate sections dealing with the periods before and after the Valleys Programme.

A major feature of the Valleys Programme is its emphasis on partnership: partnership between central and local government, the public and private sectors, employers and unions, and in particular, "partnership with the people." This partnership has been considered to be a key factor to ensure the success of the regeneration (Welsh Office 1991; Morgan and Price 1992). In this chapter, the major types of the partnership involved in the Valleys Programme, in promoting project-led urban regeneration, are identified. Detailed study of these follows in the next chapters.

### **3.2 THE WELSH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND ITS ROLE IN REGENERATION**

#### **3.2.1 Inception of the Welsh Development Agency**

To redress the industrial decline problems in Wales, the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) was established, as a public body, by the 1974-1979 Labour Government under the Welsh Development Agency Act 1975. It officially came into operation on the first of January 1976 (Welsh Development Agency, 1977). It inherited two important responsibilities - the Government's 40 year old industrial estate operation in Wales and the derelict land reclamation programme begun after the Aberfan disaster in 1966 (Pavitt, 1990). Before the formation of the WDA, the Government industrial estate had been administered by the Welsh Industrial Estates



Corporation and the derelict land reclamation programme was controlled by the Welsh Office's Derelict Land Unit (Welsh Development Agency, 1977).

Under the terms of the Welsh Development Agency Act 1975, the WDA was given the right to exercise a range of activities and initiatives to fulfil its purposes. These purposes are (ibid.):

- a. to further the economic development of Wales or any part of Wales and in that connection to provide, maintain or safeguard employment;
- b. to promote industrial efficiency and international competitiveness in Wales; and
- c. to further the improvement of the environment in Wales, having regard to existing amenity.

The WDA's role is to work for the prosperity of Wales through encouraging business enterprise and improving the environment (WDA publicity material(a)). In fulfilling the WDA's role and undertaking its responsibilities, with regard to regeneration, two divisions of the WDA are of particular importance: the Land Reclamation Unit and the Urban Development Department (formerly the Urban Renewal Unit).

### 3.2.2 The Land Reclamation Unit

The Land Reclamation Unit, as mentioned earlier, was initially the Derelict Land Unit under the Welsh Office. Land reclamation in Wales begun in 1966 when the Aberfan disaster highlighted the dangerous legacy of the Valleys' industrial past. By the early 1990's, over £160 million had been spent and 20,360 acres of industrial decay cleared, releasing new land for construction, agriculture and recreation (WDA publicity material(b)). In the implementation of land reclamation schemes, the Agency tries to maintain a balance between reclamation, environmental and economic considerations, believing that both are equally important (ibid).

The WDA gives considerable assistance to land reclamation schemes suggested by local authorities, public bodies, private companies and individuals. Before the Agency will consider a proposal, however, the land must have been so badly damaged by former industries that it cannot be re-used without suitable treatment. Then the WDA will assess the scheme's priorities according to a series of criteria (ibid).

Most important of all of these is safety. Sites which pose a hazard are given top priority. Then, the WDA investigates the site's end-use after reclamation. Similarly, the proposal's contribution to the local economy will be

evaluated. Finally, a proposal will be considered in economic terms to establish whether it is cost-effective (ibid).

If a scheme is approved, local authorities receive a 100% grant from the WDA to pay for land acquisition and reclamation costs. However, the Agency will recoup the land value of those parts of a site which are subsequently developed through whichever means is appropriate for the development in question - eg. through sale or letting (ibid). Private sector schemes are eligible for a grant to cover 80% of a project's net loss to enable the developer to transform wasteland into a greenfield state. Also, grants of up to 50% are available for a range of smaller scale environment enhancing projects (ibid).

### **3.2.3 The Urban Development Department (Formerly The Urban Renewal Unit)**

The Urban Development Department (then the Urban Renewal Unit) was set up in 1986 to be a focus in extending land reclamation and environmental improvement into partnership projects for urban renewal, and to work closely with the Welsh Office Urban Programme (Pavitt,1990). At first the Unit saw itself as a broker to bring the public and private sectors together but the need for significant direct investment was recognised and direct expenditure had been increased to about £7 millions per annum in 1990 (ibid).

The Urban Development Department operates very differently from local or central government because the closely-knit programmes of urban renewal and land reclamation must fall within the Agency's corporate guidelines. Environmental improvement is used by the Department to help the local economy and the Agency does not aid local improvements that have purely social or civic objectives. The Department does not aim to achieve significant improvements to the Welsh urban environment on its own. Instead, it can play a significant role in bringing together the needs of the community and the opportunity for investors to bring about regeneration (ibid). In short, it acts as a promoter of partnerships.

The WDA's urban renewal programme aids renewal projects according to the priorities assessed with the following four criteria (ibid):

- a. there must be a need for regeneration;
- b. there must be opportunities for regeneration;
- c. it must be possible to create an organisation for regeneration; and
- d. it must be possible to achieve visible or measurable results within a reasonable period.

The resources the Department can put into urban renewal projects include: offering advice; helping buy the necessary expertise; putting funds directly into environmental improvement in towns; investing WDA money directly in development projects; and taking advantage of the Agency's marketing ability.

The role of the Department in the Valleys Programme is summed up by Whittaker (1988) as follows:

- a. as a **Broker and Co-ordinator**, linking interested bodies involved in urban regeneration - government (both central and local), the local community, and the public and private commercial sectors;
- b. as an **Adviser** to any and all those concerned in the Valleys development;
- c. as an **Assessor** of certain schemes and of certain applications for grants;
- d. as an **Initiator** of site and project identification; and
- e. as a **Source of Funding** - both grant-aid and investment.

### **3.3 THE VALLEYS REGENERATION UP TO 1988: EFFORTS OF SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS**

Efforts to regenerate the depressed South Wales Valleys have

been made by successive governments since the early years of decline. The 1947 Town & Country Planning Act introduced Industrial Development Certificates to facilitate the attracting of industry to depressed areas. In addition loans, and tax and other concessions were offered (Morgan,1988). A number of factories was thus set up in the Valleys with government backing. By 1949, 179 new factories had been opened and of these 112 were government backed.

In the Rhondda, by 1955, 25 government sponsored factories had been established at a total cost of approximately £2 million. Others were also set up at Merthyr, Dowlais and Blaenavon (Lewis,1963). New employment was thus generated but of a totally different kind from that of the traditional industries of the area. New trading estates were also set up, such as that at Bridgend. As a result by 1955 the unemployment figure within South Wales was down to 13,400 (ibid). Despite the success of the government's factory and development programme, decline continued and a shift of population was still occurring within the Valleys (Morgan,1988).

Regeneration in the form of derelict land reclamation began after the Aberfan disaster in October 1966 when more than 100 children were killed as a coal tip engulfed their school (Morgan and Price 1992). By the end of 1992, some 21,000 acres of derelict land in the Welsh valleys will have been reclaimed (Vickerman,1992). Some of this land reclaimed has

been developed further for industrial or commercial use. By the mid 1980's, a thousand acres of land were developed and seven million square feet of factory space created (Pavitt, 1990). A significant example is the site of the 1992 National Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale, where about 200 acres of derelict land was reclaimed at a cost of £20 million (see Chapter 4). The site is marketed for industry, housing and recreation after the Festival finished in October 1992 (Vickerman, 1992).

Programmes of land reclamation, site preparation and factory building were the focus of the WDA's effort in the early years. During 1980s, it became increasingly clear that the Agency had to take a wider view of the economy if Wales was to take full advantage of the opportunities available. New programmes for technology, agriculture, rural areas, training and education were developed (Pavitt, 1990).

In 1986 the Welsh Office published "Community Investment: An Initiative for the Valleys." (Welsh Office, 1986). Its objective was "to bring about substantial and visible improvements in the valleys and the environment of town centre areas and the areas immediately leading to them." It recognised that "one of the major disadvantages at present is the appearance of many of the urban centres and the lack of amenities which ought to be the hub of social and even economic activity." It sought to trigger a series of coordinated initiatives by local bodies including those from the private and voluntary sectors. The Welsh Office was

prepared to back up to six projects in the first phase with additional resources of about £3 million for 1986/87. In the Initiative the importance of the enthusiasm, co-operation and efforts of the local communities were stressed.

Compared with this Valleys Initiative of 1986, the Valleys Programme launched by the Welsh Office in 1988 is a much wider and more comprehensive approach to the regeneration of the Valleys area as a whole. This is discussed in the following section.

#### **3.4 THE VALLEYS REGENERATION SINCE 1988: THE VALLEYS PROGRAMME**

This is the latest and perhaps most significant Welsh Office urban initiative. Launched by Peter Walker, the (then) Secretary of State for Wales in June 1988, the Valleys Programme is a major landmark in the development of urban policy. It has no exact parallel anywhere else in the UK. It is not concerned with a relatively self-contained area like the London Docklands or Cardiff Bay or solely with physical redevelopment. Rather, it is concerned with an area of over 800 square miles which contains some 700,000 people and touches on all or part of 21 local authority areas. It is concerned with action across the whole range of activities affecting economic, environmental and social conditions.



As noted in Chapter 1 the aims of the Programme, as Peter Walker put it, are "to improve significantly the prosperity of the Valleys of South Wales and the well being of the people who live in them; to give people a new confidence in the future of their Valleys as places in which to live and work and to instil in people elsewhere a new perception of the area as a place worth visiting and investing in." (Welsh Office,1988).

The Programme set out to reduce the unemployment by 25-30,000; to clear 2500 acres of dereliction; to build 1.3 million square feet of advance factory space; to improve 32,000 homes and provide over 10,000 new ones; to generate over £1 billion private sector investment; to improve health care; to strengthen links between business and schools and to strengthen the voluntary sector (Mitchell,1988).

The Valleys Programme was initially scheduled for three years. With an estimated expenditure of over £500 million it contained key programmes affecting economic development, environmental improvement and urban renewal (ibid).

Under the headings of "Create a New Economy", "Education and Training", "Tourism, Leisure and the Arts", "Roads", "Environment", "Voluntary Effort", "Health and Social Services" and "Housing", the Valleys Programme set out about 50 schemes of action. Twenty two of them were newly established, the others being enhancements of existing ones.

The Welsh Development Agency played an important role in the Programme and committed about half of its budget to the Valleys Programme in the three years of the duration. In 1988, the first year of the Programme, the WDA's budget for the Valleys was £40.7 million - an increase of 80% on expenditure of the previous year (Whittaker,1988).

The Urban Development Department of the WDA established the following guidelines for the selection of the most appropriate and compelling schemes to be aided in the regeneration (ibid):

a. schemes which result firstly, in development in three areas - commercial, industrial, and residential; and secondly, in associated environmental improvements;

b schemes that can take full advantage of land reclamation site which are already or can be grant-aided by the WDA;

c projects which will be given priority by the Welsh Office as part of a coordinated programme using Urban Programme funds, Urban Development Grant, and European Regional Development Fund assistance;

d schemes which build on environmental improvements which are already programmed, to enhance the quality of the final project; and

e schemes that attract private sector investment and increase leverage of private funds.

By November 1988 a range of projects were already underway, including town centre renewal in Abertillery and tourism development in the Rhondda Heritage Park, both of which are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

In the Valleys Programme it is recognised that "success will not be achieved just by the action of Government. Success can only come from the enthusiasm and energy of the people." (Welsh Office, 1988). This "partnership with the people" was given new prominence when the Valleys Programme was extended for another two years by David Hunt (Peter Walker's successor as Welsh Secretary) in 1990. The emphasis was on how the people of the Valleys can best make their contribution through partnership with public and other bodies which are actively involved in the area.

In the extension of the Valleys Programme, it has been claimed that the key to the success of the Programme has been the partnership it has engendered, between central and local government, the public and private sectors, and employers and unions. The partnership with the people of the Valleys is expected to lead to greater success in the regeneration. The second stage of the programme therefore emphasises people and community based activities and projects with a high level of public involvement (Welsh

Office,1990).

With the two year extension of the Valleys Programme, another £300 million expenditure was allocated, making a total £800 million of government spending on the Programme during its five year life. The Valleys Programme for this second stage includes: (Welsh Office,1990)

**a. practical partnerships**

- flagship schemes for the involvement of communities in their revival
- pilot projects for employee volunteering
- a Valleys festival
- training initiatives by the Training and Enterprise Councils
- an improved support system for community enterprise

**b. partnership in action**

- development of community enterprises
- the National Garden Festival
- encouragement of private sector investment
- employment service initiatives
- training of young people
- improvements in rail services
- developing partnership initiatives in housing

### c. action, partnership and commitment

- a strengthened network of Local Enterprise Agencies
- action on WDA research projects
- continuing grants to industry and local authorities
- increased training opportunities
- initiatives resulting from skills surveys
- increased numbers of tourists
- road improvements
- elimination of dereliction by end of century
- further improvement of town centres
- more voluntary activity
- better hospital provision
- help for Valleys GPs
- more homes built and improved

The Valleys Programme is due to end in March 1993. It has begun to receive attention by way of assessment. There are claims that it has largely failed and different policies should therefore be adopted (Morgan,1992; Turner,1992).

However there are other arguments claiming that the success of many projects has been dampened by the recession. For example, large amounts of land reclamation has taken place and infrastructure provided under the Valleys Programme has created opportunities for development, but there has been a lack of take up. "The original Valleys Programme has had two very positive achievements: one of focusing the spotlight on the Valleys and secondly engendering the

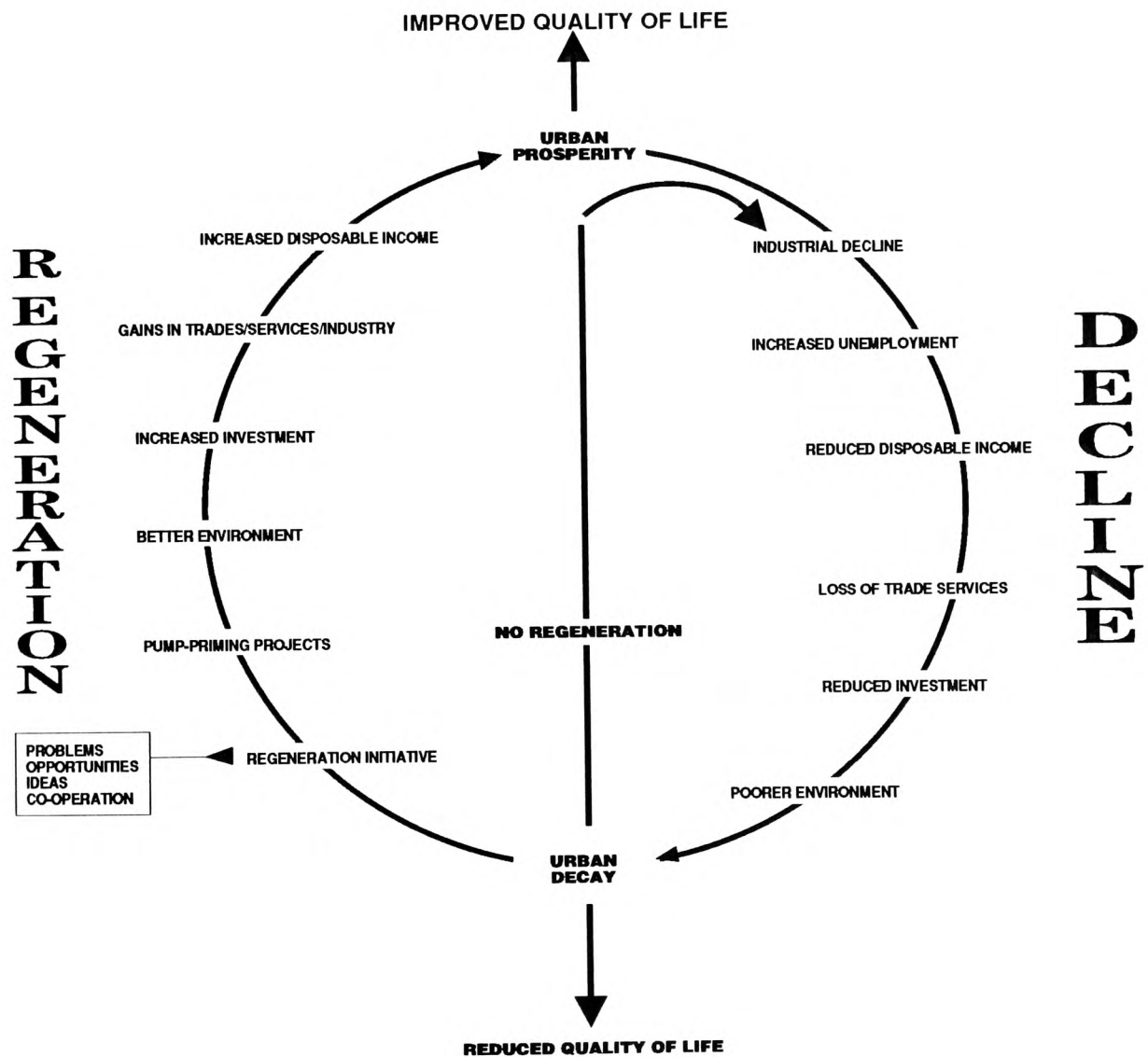
principle of partnership. There can be little doubt that a well orchestrated multi-lateral approach will have far more impact than a series of separate initiatives. Any new programme must continue with existing partnerships and seek to create new ones." (Heads of the Valleys Standing Conference,1992). It is therefore hoped that the Programme should be extended further in order to achieve real benefits (Davy,private communication,1992)

### **3.5 MODELS OF PARTNERSHIP IN THE VALLEYS REGENERATION**

The cycle of urban decline and regeneration is shown in Fig.3.1 (Pavitt,1990). A successful regeneration initiative must start with the identification of problems and opportunities; the generation of ideas and co-operation to produce a coordinated plan of action and programme of investment. It must go beyond bricks and mortar to generate business activity and community initiatives. It must be based in the community but may draw on resources from outside. Regeneration depends on partnership between the community, voluntary organisations, local authorities and public agencies and the private commercial sector(ibid).

Though the basic aims are the same, the approaches of regeneration of individual areas will necessarily differ from one another. This is particularly true in the regeneration of the Valleys where diversity and complexity prevails: each town or village is distinctively different

# FIG. 3.1 THE CYCLE OF DECLINE AND REGENERATION



Source: Pavitt, 1990

from others in condition, challenges and opportunities. In the Valleys Programme, a variety of regeneration projects is promoted, involving different partnership models.

Although there are other partnership models, the following are identified in the present study as being the most important, in promoting the Valleys regeneration projects.

a. **the Independent Organisation.** This is represented by the 1992 National Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale. An independent company, the 1992 National Garden Festival Company, was set up to organise and run the Festival. The company was created jointly by Gwent County Council and Blaenau Gwent Borough Council with Welsh Office backing. Outside the Valleys such an independent organisation has been created by central government, for example, the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation.

Independent organisations are always related to "flagship" projects. The Ebbw Vale Garden Festival project has been widely regarded as the "flagship" project of the Valleys regeneration, with about £60 million of public and private investment. It is one of the largest projects in the Valleys Programme in terms of investment, and has been expected by the government to deliver considerable benefits, such as land reclamation, job creation, image improvements and economic gains, to both the local area and the Valleys as a whole.



Being independent, this type of organisation is least influenced by the WDA and local authorities in its decision-making process. Also, the local communities are much less involved compared with the other models of organisation.

Particular consideration has been paid to this case study in this research for two reasons. Firstly, the scale of the investment involved makes it a project of considerable significance on a national, as well as a local and regional stage. Secondly, it is explicitly one of a series of such initiatives which have taken place over a relatively short timescale, hence there is the need to draw lessons from, and draw comparisons with, its predecessors.

**b. the Contractual Joint Venture.** This model involves a legal partnership between the WDA and one or more local authorities. Each party invests in the project and draws receipts in proportion to its investment. It is normally established in towns considered to offer the potential for a major impact on the Welsh economy through comprehensive action and large scale investment. Up to 1991, six towns and areas had been selected in Wales for this approach, accounting for around half the planned total spending in 1991-92 (Anon,1991b). The areas covered are Holyhead and Rhyl; (North Wales), Milford Haven (West Wales), and three areas in industrial South Wales - the Cynon Valley and Merthyr Tydfil in the Valleys and Llanelli.

Of these three, the Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration project was the first to be set up (in 1990) and the process of change is already underway. It was also the only one of this type which was established when this research began in 1990. The other two joint venture in the Valleys were launched at a later stage as mentioned in Section 1.5. Whilst the Llanelli coastal area is beyond the South Wales Valleys, the Borough of Llanelli actually straddles the boundary of the Valleys Initiative area. For these reasons, Llanelli was chosen as the case study of this research. A special feature of this project is that a large area of land under the ownership of the local authorities was available for development and so formed the basis for the joint venture. The project is comparable with the Garden Festival Wales in that the end product is the same for both, i.e., a large area of reclaimed land available for further comprehensive development. This is also an aspect of consideration for choosing the Llanelli project as a case study to illustrate the Contractual Joint Venture.

c. **the Informal Consortium.** This is a consortium between the WDA, local authorities and other organisations, which works by co-ordinating the activities of its members to achieve defined objectives. It has been most commonly adopted in the regeneration of the Valleys, covering areas such as Abertillery, Tylorstown, Pontypridd-Trefforest, and Caerphilly. The informal consortium is not legally binding and this is one of the major differences from the joint

venture model. It generally operates on a smaller scale, usually concentrating on a number of specific schemes. Abertillery Town Centre Renewal and Rhondda Heritage Park are two typical examples of this model, although they are two different kinds of projects. The former is a town centre renewal similar to other inner city regeneration strategies whilst the latter is essentially tourism oriented, comparable to the tourism event aspect of the Garden Festival Wales.

In the following chapters, the three models and their corresponding projects are studied in detail.

## CHAPTER 4 THE "INDEPENDENT ORGANISATION" PROJECT: GARDEN FESTIVAL WALES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The 1992 National Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale has been the largest individual project in the Valleys' regeneration. With a total investment of some £60 million, it has always been expected to deliver considerable benefits both to the locality and to the Valleys area as a whole. However, besides a short period of popularity and attraction from this high profile event, what can the local and the Valleys people gain? What benefits can be realistically expected from this "flagship" regeneration project, an important example of the Independent Organisation model of regeneration partnership. Additionally, how can the benefits, in particular those of a long term nature, be maximised?

These are the questions addressed in this chapter. When this research began in 1990, Garden Festival Wales was still in its early stages, mainly land reclamation. Even at the time of writing (November 1992) the after-use development of the Festival site has hardly started, although the Festival itself is over. It was intended that some useful ideas could be drawn from the study and offered to the Festival organisers, who were the collaborating body for this research.

This has been achieved by studying the previous Garden Festivals held in the U.K. and taking account of the special circumstances of Garden Festival Wales and the Valleys. Four Garden Festivals were previously held in Liverpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Glasgow and Gateshead respectively. Evaluations of these Festivals exist but, as will be shown, a continuing sense of unease about the long-term benefits of the Festivals remains. The most thorough evaluation of Garden Festivals was probably that commissioned by the Department of Environment, with the evaluation report published in 1990 (DoE,1990). The evaluation followed the first three Festivals; the 1990 Garden Festival at Gateshead was necessarily not included in the study. However, the Gateshead Festival is considered by the author to be the most successful in securing the after-use of the Festival site in advance. Benefiting from the lessons of its predecessors, the Gateshead Festival was the first one to produce an after-use strategy before the opening of the Festival, and it was also the most successful in achieving long-term benefits from the project.

In this Chapter, after a brief introduction to the background to the Garden Festivals, the first four Festivals are examined, with the emphasis on Gateshead. The impact of these Festivals on urban regeneration is investigated. The weaknesses of the approach which has been taken to Garden Festivals are identified and possible reforms to maximise the long-term benefits are suggested.

The second half of this chapter is devoted to the study of the 1992 Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale. The background of the Festival is briefly introduced. Then the special features of the Festival, in terms of the setting of the site, the conflicting objectives of the project, and the weak private sector activity in host area are recognised and discussed. Based on the study of the previous Garden Festivals and the special features of Garden Festival Wales, the benefits which can be realistically expected are outlined. Then suggestions are made with regard to the maximisation of long-term benefits.

In addition to the questions raised at the beginning of this introduction, it ought to be asked if the Garden Festival is a cost-effective way to secure urban regeneration; how does it compare with the other projects of the Valleys Programme? These are mainly dealt with in the next chapter.

#### **4.2 BACKGROUND TO THE GARDEN FESTIVALS**

The concept of the Garden Festival originated in Germany before the second world war. German Garden Festivals have been staged every two years since their inauguration in their present form in 1951. The emphasis has been on the reclamation of urban land to provide permanent parkland. In the Netherlands, a similar event - The Floriade - is held every ten years.

In Britain, the idea was initially considered by the Department of the Environment in 1980. Launched by Michael Heseltine in his first term of office as Secretary of State for the Environment, Garden Festivals have been held biennially since 1984 at Liverpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Glasgow, Gateshead and Ebbw Vale. They have become an important element in the Government's attack on the economic and physical decline of inner urban areas, especially by promoting a change to the image and morale of the host locality (DoE,1990).

So far, Garden Festivals in Britain still represent a new, and, to some extent, experimental policy approach. The main objectives generally cover land reclamation, environmental improvement and economic benefits (ibid.):

**a. reclamation**

(i). Rapid reclamation of large derelict sites against a tight timescale. This results in reclamation occurring more rapidly than would otherwise have been the case.

(ii). The reclaimed site should gain a higher quality landscape and development than would otherwise be achieved.

**b. environmental**

(i). Environmental improvement on the site.

(ii) The project should act as a spur for environmental improvements over a wider area.

(iii). Longer term environmental benefits for the host town or city and its region, including "image" effects.

#### **c. economic**

(i). Short-term economic benefits for the local area and its wider region due to construction work, operations and franchises associated with the Garden Festival, and expenditure-related spin-offs from visitors to the Festival.

(ii). Longer term economic benefits (mainly from the after-use of the site).

(iii). Stimulation of landscape design and a showcase for the horticultural industries.

However, different priorities on the various objectives were often acknowledged by the Festival organisers at an early stage of each Festival process and therefore correspond to outcomes. Launched in some of the country's most depressed areas, with the highest rates of unemployment or with large amounts of derelict land, all Garden Festivals have delivered some benefits to their local areas. They all provided for a fast reclamation of derelict and polluted sites, as well as generating economic benefits from the jobs



created and improving the image of the urban areas involved. A detailed examination follows in the next section.

#### **4.3 EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST FOUR GARDEN FESTIVALS**

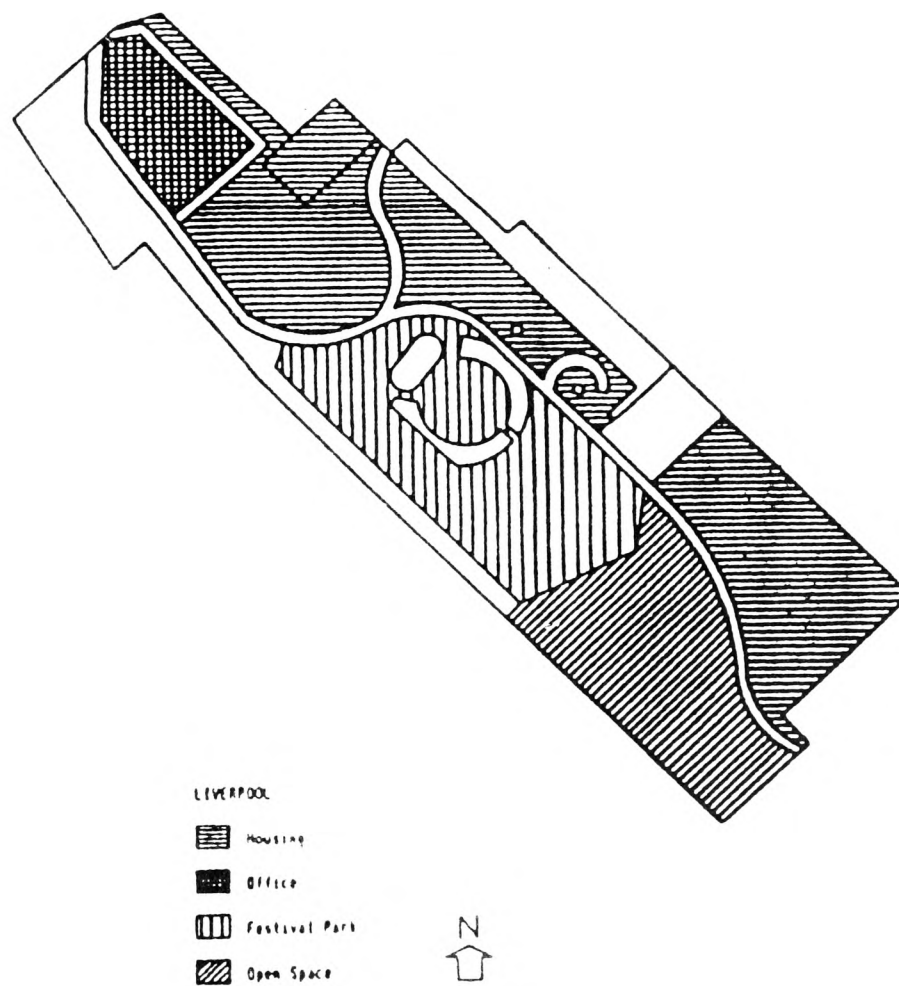
##### **4.3.1 Brief Review of the First Four Garden Festivals**

###### **Liverpool (1984)**

Liverpool International Garden Festival was the first to be staged in Britain (Fig.4.1). Uniquely, in comparison with those that have followed, it was given international status. Before the Festival, the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC) was already established in Liverpool with a Riverside Development Programme and a budget commitment to reclamation on a site in its ownership. The site consisted of a former rubbish tip, oil tank installations and degraded shoreline. It was not visible from the area north of the site and access was poor. The MDC's development programme for the site covered housing, industrial and commercial buildings and open space. When the Festival was awarded, the MDC was designated by the central government to organise and run it.

The MDC had only two and a half years to plan, prepare and run the International Garden Festival. Emphasis was placed on the speed of reclamation, horticultural aspect and operational success rather than on the long-term economic benefits (DoE,1990). The achievements were in accord with

Figure 4.1 Liverpool International Garden Festival:  
After-use proposals



Source: O'Toole and Robinson, 1990

the emphasis: about 240 acres of derelict land were reclaimed; nearly 3.5 million people were attracted to the Festival; and favourable press and television coverage was won, which boosted the image of the city at the time (Holden,1987). However, up to 1990, there was still a lack of resultant development in Liverpool suggesting that the image effect was fading and the benefits were mainly environmental and short term (DoE,1990). This was also clearly pointed out by David Copeland, Executive Director of the 1990 Gateshead National Garden Festival, "Looking back at Liverpool, I think the government expected more from that than it was capable of delivering. Everyone said how great it was, but what happened next? Nothing" (Lee,1989).

However, some progress has been made recently. By December 1991, part of the site was being developed by a company called Tomorrow's Leisure to convert it into a leisure park, and the rest was being developed for housing, with about 500 units to be built. The housing will be a mixture of private, housing association and self-build properties (Trehwella,telephone interview,1991).

Although some leisure and housing development had been started on the site after more than 6 years from the Festival closure, the Garden Festival at Liverpool did not become an immediate catalyst for commercial and industrial development as was expected by the Government when it initiated the Garden Festivals. Neither can the after-use

be directly attributed to the stimulus of the Festival's image improvement effect.

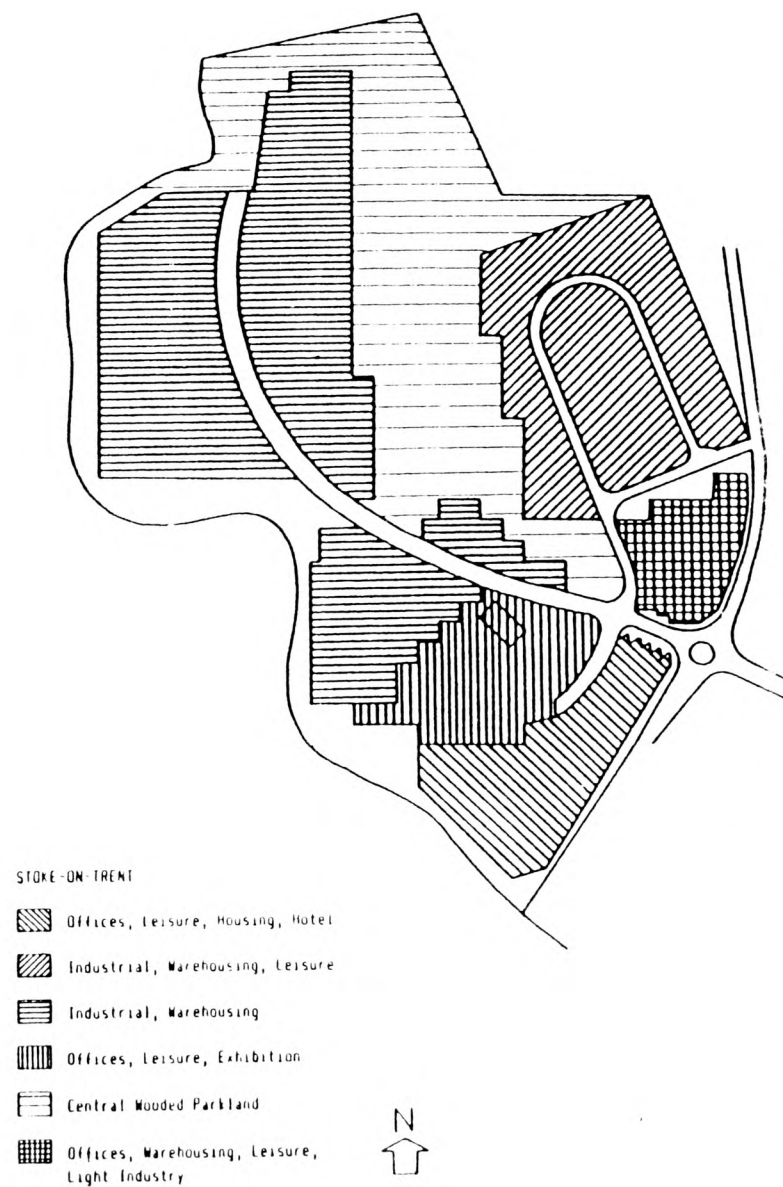
The failure to achieve the expected after-use of the Festival site in Liverpool was partly due to the tight time scale and partly due to the adverse local political and national economic situations. With only 30 months to organise the Festival there was insufficient time to incorporate the event into the local urban regeneration scheme. Consequently, Liverpool City Council refused to adopt the site from the MDC. The central spine road essential for access to the site was not built until 1986, and the absence of this acted as a deterrent to early development (DoE,1990).

### **Stoke-on-Trent (1986)**

The Stoke-on-Trent National Garden Festival was undertaken jointly by the City and County Councils in conjunction with the Department of Environment (Fig.4.2). The City Council took on the responsibility of setting up a Garden Festival Company which ran the Festival.

The site of the Festival was the disused Shelton Steelworks. A basic principle in running this Festival was that every opportunity should be taken to enhance the long-term development potential of the site (Barley,interview,1991). Accordingly, less importance was placed on the operational

Figure 4.2 Stoke-on-Trent National Garden Festival:  
After-use proposals



Source: O'Toole and Robinson, 1990

objectives of the event itself, with a greater emphasis on the quality and speed of reclamation of the whole site and also on its conversion to after-use, targeting the major benefits at long-term economic achievements. As a result, the event itself was less successful than Liverpool in operational terms (Holden,1987). It received nothing of the national media coverage which Liverpool enjoyed. Due to the wet summer, there was a depressed attendance by visitors. However, Stoke has achieved greater success in terms of the long-term use of the site.

In January 1986, just before the Festival opening, Stoke City Council published a long-term Development Brief for the Festival Park. By the time the Festival was closed in October 1986, a number of developers had approached the City Council expressing interest in developing a major retail outlet on the main road frontage (east side of the Woodland Ridge). It was made clear that such a proposal would only be sympathetically considered if the land on the west side of the Ridge (former garden and lakes) were to be developed for leisure purposes (Anon,1988a).

After a delay of about three years, the site was eventually sold to St Modwen Properties, who have since been working at Festival Park on a comprehensive scheme, including retail, commercial, hotel and leisure facilities on about 100 acres. The national economic climate at that time was conducive to such a bold scheme. Many of the features from the National

Garden Festival were retained at Festival Park so that the public continue to have free access to substantial landscaped and wooded areas which formed an important part of the scheme.

It may be appropriate to say that the main benefit of the Stoke Garden Festival was that the improved site appealed to the developers. The delay in long-term development of the site was probably due to the late determination of an after-use strategy (Barley,interview,1991).

#### Glasgow (1988)

The site of the Glasgow Garden Festival was formerly run-down dockland similar to that at Liverpool. Lying on the Clyde riverfront, in sight of the city centre, the Govan site was some 120 acres - significantly smaller than both the Liverpool and Stoke-on-Trent sites. It was owned by Laing Homes. The Scottish Development Agency - the sponsor of the Festival - leased the land for the 1988 Garden Festival, in a controversial deal giving Laing a package of other sites in Glasgow. After the Garden Festival the site was reverted to Laing (Anon,1990).

The Glasgow Festival differed from Liverpool and Stoke in seeking to provide a range of attractions, which were broader than the purely horticultural. The emphasis of the Festival was on environmental improvement and image-building. As a result, the city's tourism benefited from

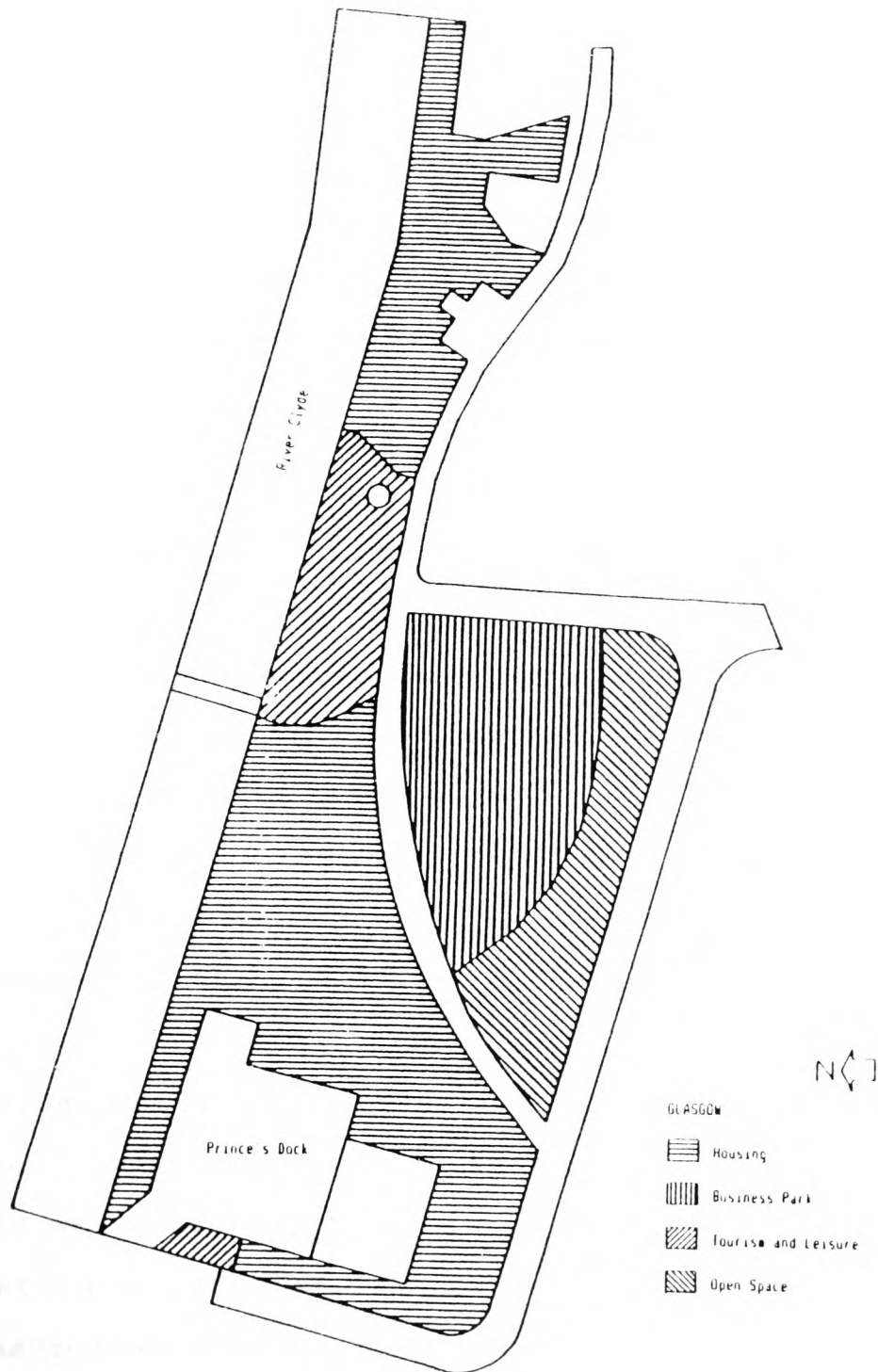
the marketing of Festival and the boost which the event gave to the image of Glasgow (DoE,1990). However, it may be argued that the image boost was to a great extent due to the "Glasgow's miles better" campaign, launched in 1983. The Garden Festival was but one in a string of increasingly ambitious public exhibitions in and around Glasgow as the city prepared for its year as European City of Culture in 1990 (Parker-Jervis,1988).

As far as the long-term economic benefits of the Festival are concerned, Glasgow was the first Garden Festival with the long term use of the site fixed from the outset. However this was to be mainly housing (Fig.4.3), which had no direct link with the Festival; the site owner, Laing Homes, had already announced its intention to build houses long before the Festival was planned. So the Festival cannot claim to have significant long term benefits for the site.

Much was made of the criticism (Holden,1988) that Glasgow was a "throwaway festival", spending central government money without any long term public benefit. As noted above, Laing intended to develop the site entirely for residential purposes, but the after-use was expected to include a business park and public parkland, as well as housing. According to Mr Turnbull of Glasgow City Planning Department (telephone interview,1991) some development has commenced on the site. Three out of the proposed five blocks of



Figure 4.3 Glasgow National Garden Festival:  
After-use proposals



Source: O'Toole and Robinson, 1990

residential apartments have been constructed. Yet to commence are:

- The remaining two blocks of apartments by the river;
- Further two-story housing;
- A business park, which will be separated from the rest of the development by a re-alignment of Govan Road;
- Open space/parkland.

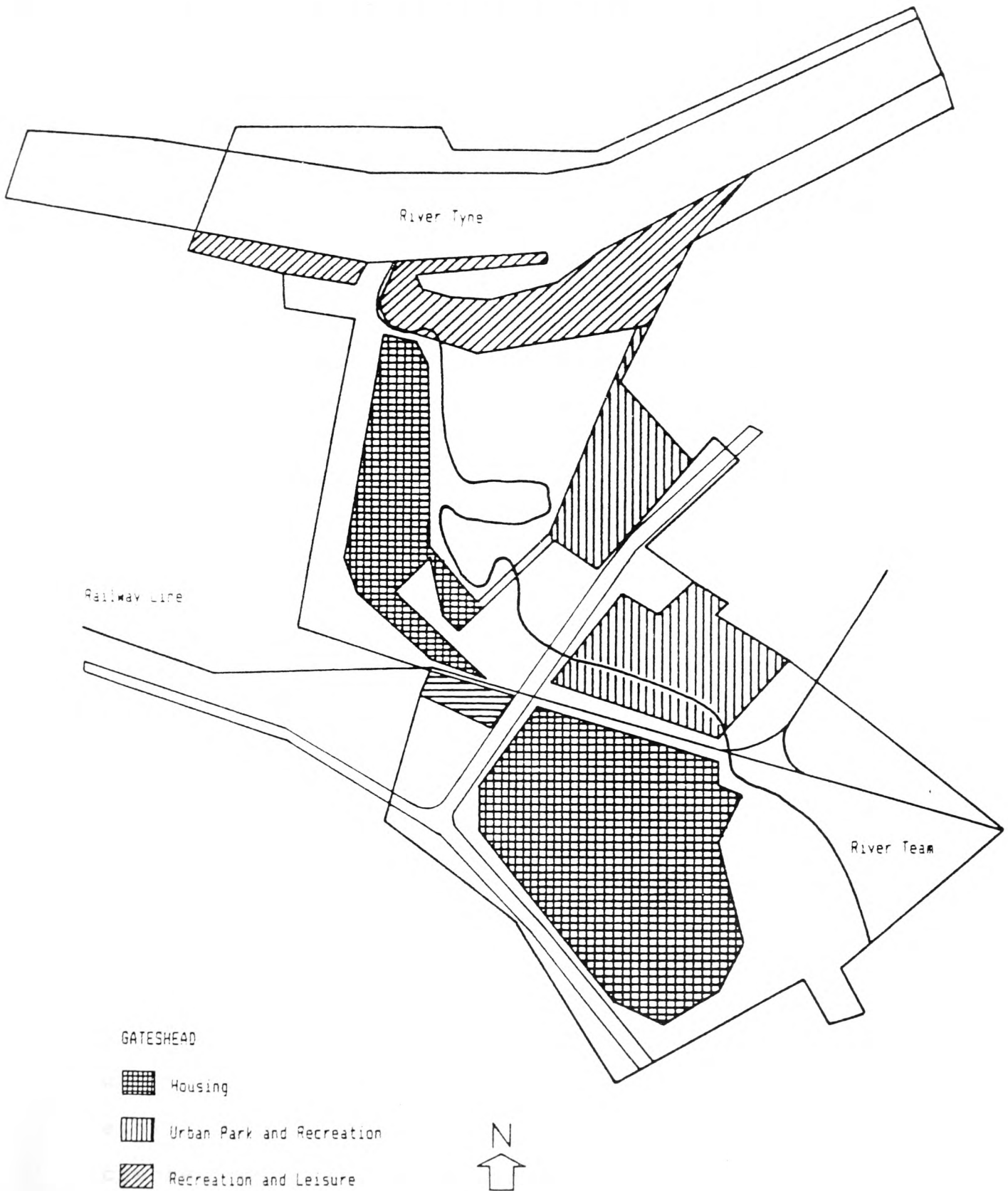
Also under consideration are a marina and a maritime museum at the River Clyde basin.

Laing has also developed 120 acres of compensatory "offset sites" of derelict land elsewhere in Glasgow. Thus it has been claimed that the real value of the Festival totals 240 acres of derelict land reclamation (ibid.).

### **Gateshead (1990)**

The Gateshead Garden Festival was better planned than its three predecessors as far as the after-use of the Festival site was concerned (Fig.4.4). As host to the fourth Garden Festival, Gateshead Borough Council took precautionary measures in advance to secure the after-use. These have appeared to be much more successful in taking commercial advantage of the Festival site compared to the earlier

Figure 4.4 Gateshead National Garden Festival:  
After-use proposals



Source: O'Toole and Robinson, 1990

three. Over a year before the Festival opened, the after-use of the whole site had already been committed. As pointed out by Barford and Young (interview,1991), the long-term benefits of the Gateshead Festival could be reasonably attributed to land reclamation and the environmental improvement of the site.

To assess Gateshead's success an understanding of the context in which the Festival was an integral part of an urban regeneration strategy is necessary.

Gateshead in the immediate post-war years had an economy based on mining, mining engineering and coal processing. Many of these had experienced a substantial decline and left a considerable amount of derelict land and high levels of unemployment.

Before the Festival, various efforts had already been made by the local authorities to deal with the reclamation of derelict land, to obtain environmental improvements and to achieve urban regeneration with the help of Central Government and with the collaboration of the private sector. The overall scheme included:

a. the creation of the Gateshead International Stadium, which places Gateshead in a position of prominence in athletics both nationally and internationally and has created an opportunity to reshape its image and its marketability;

b. the creation of three subzones within the Newcastle and Gateshead Enterprise Zone;

c. Estate Action Initiatives in housing;

d. one major venture in the reclamation of derelict land - the creation of the Metro Centre which produced a £200 million mainly retail development, and created 6000 jobs, with the potential for even further expansion. Its success gave a tremendous boost to local confidence. (The Institution of Civil Engineers,1988).

The Gateshead National Garden Festival, therefore, can be seen in the context of the local authority's urban regeneration policy as:

a. helping to improve the regional image and further boosting local confidence;

b. delivering reclaimed sites with useful predetermined post-festival roles which include housing, leisure and tourism.(The Institution of Civil Engineers,1988).

The Festival site comprised a derelict coke works, tar works, railway sidings and a gas works. It was a complex site, having four separate but interlinked areas. Gateshead Borough Council was the land owner. Reclamation work was

carried out by Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council. A company, National Garden Festival 90, was set up to organise and run the Festival.

Both the Company and the Council had learned the lessons of the previously staged Garden Festivals. They realised the significance of securing in advance a sound and appropriate after-use of the Festival site, both to the success of the Festival itself and to the physical and economic regeneration of the area (Barford and Young, interview, 1991).

The after-use plan for the Festival site was produced by the local authority. The strategy adopted was closely linked to the statutory Local Plan for the area which was already in place when Gateshead was awarded the Festival in 1984. The Borough Council requested that a mix of rented and private housing, and leisure and recreational uses be incorporated into the Festival site (ibid.).

As the after-use plan was finalised well in advance of the Festival opening, the effective marketing and promotion of the Festival helped the disposal of the site for later development.

The 40-acre Riverside site was bought by McAlpine's in February 1989. The after-use of this prime waterside site had been agreed in principle between the Council and the developer. McAlpine's invested £2 million in the site during the Festival construction period and helped with the

installation of infrastructure. Immediately after the closure of the Festival and the completion of dismantling the Festival facilities, McAlpine's began to build a mixed scheme, including light industry, commercial and leisure development. The developer was also committed to maintaining Dunston Staithes in spite of its limited commercial potential (Aldous, 1990).

Immediately behind the western upstream section of the McAlpine site was the 12-acre Dunston zone, where the after-use plan was for sheltered housing and rented housing. Bradford and Northern Housing Association, and the local Two Castles Housing Association were committed to the housing development, again before the Festival commenced. The site is now under construction in accordance with the predetermined plan.

The third zone, Eslington, largely consisted of rather run-down council playing fields in a poor environment, was retained as public open space, ideally preserving the Festival landscape. Creation of additional public open space at the site is also under way.

Norwood, 30-acre of Festival site and 5-acre of car park, was the fourth zone, at the southern end of the Festival site. Shepherd Homes bought the site and contributed to the installation of infrastructure during the Festival construction period, with the intention of undertaking a

residential scheme.

Thus the Festival was successful in securing the after-use development of the site (Plate 1 and Plate 2). However, economic development takes time; it would be unrealistic to expect the Garden Festival to have an immediate and large impact on the local economy. The after-use development would be affected by various factors, such as regional and national economic circumstances. However, the successful after-use plan and site commitment were the crucial steps leading to successful development of the after-use and to the realisation of Festival objectives.

Clearly, the approach to after-use achievement in the first four Garden Festivals has been variable. All had after-use proposals for the site, but the difference in the approach adopted to the proposals resulted in a considerable variance in the fulfilment. In any event, the main benefit to the local communities was land reclamation and site improvement, rather than the Festival itself.

The Liverpool, Stoke and Glasgow Festivals have been generally considered to be less successful in taking commercial advantage of the Festival site. "...the major question of what their potential long-term benefits are remains unanswered" (DoE,1990).

On the whole, the four Garden Festivals all achieved success in land reclamation and environmental improvement of the



Plate 1 and Plate 2



Gateshead National Garden Festival 1990: Sites Ready for Programmed After-use Development

site. The image-boosting effect, and, more importantly, the cost-effectiveness of Garden Festivals as an urban regeneration initiative have nevertheless been much less certain.

#### 4.3.2 Garden Festivals: Urban Regeneration Projects?

Before the cost-effectiveness of Garden Festivals can be assessed, the nature of the Garden Festival has to be established: is it primarily an urban regeneration project or a tourist event? As mentioned earlier, the Government has promoted the Garden Festival as an important element in its urban regeneration policy. However, when analysed in terms of expenditure (Table 4.1), the emphasis on tourism is obvious.

The first three Garden Festivals each had a total gross cost of some £50 million, (of which about 72.9% was from promoters' funding, ie, public investment). Although part of the cost was recouped from the sale of residual assets, disposal of the site and Festival income, the promoters' net costs still reached an average level of £23.7 million. Moreover, each of the three Festivals had an operational deficit (DoE,1990).

Analysis of the total gross costs shows that these can be divided primarily into three categories: land reclamation (22.8%), Festival capital development (46.7%) and Festival operation (28.7%). Of the three categories of cost,

**Table 4.1** Costs for Liverpool, Stoke and Glasgow Garden Festivals (1985 prices)

|                                | LIVERPOOL<br>(£m) | STOKE<br>(£m) | GLASGOW<br>(£m) | CASH (£m) | AVERAGE<br>PERCENTAGE (%) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Site Acquisition & Reclamation | 10.3              | 10.6          | 13.2            | 11.4      | 22.8%                     |
| Capital Development            | 18.5              | 18.3          | 33.4            | 23.4      | 46.7%                     |
| Festival Operation             | 10.9              | 11            | 21.4            | 14.4      | 28.7%                     |
| Dismantling Costs              | 1.1               | 0.2           | 1.3             | 0.9       | 1.8%                      |
| Total Gross Costs              | 40.8              | 40.1          | 69.3            | 50.1      | 100%                      |
| Gross Costs From Promoters     | 33.0              | 31.2          | 45.2            | 36.5      | 72.9%                     |
| Net Costs From Promoters       | 20.6              | 20.5          | 29.9            | 23.7      |                           |

SOURCE: DoE, 1990

Festival capital development and Festival operation are essentially components of a tourism event. Such an event is temporary, resulting in some short-term benefits to local areas by the creation of temporary jobs, tourist expenditure and raising the level of publicity and popularity of the area. In addition, the benefit to the local economy should take account of the host authorities' operational deficits.

There is inadequate evidence to indicate that Garden Festivals have established the host area as a more substantial long-term tourist destination, whether through repeat trips by Festival visitors or through tourists attracted by the publicity which the Festival generates for the area as a whole. Therefore, the benefit generated by tourist expenditure is likely to be a "once and for all" effect, and of short term duration.

Clearly, it can be said that a Garden Festival is a costly tourist event, taking on average about three quarters of the total costs of the Festival project. This leaves only one quarter for land reclamation, which is one of the most important factors in attracting long-term private investment.

While it can still be argued that the cost of such a tourist event is still good value for money in terms of a local area's image improvement and the boosting of its morale, the lack of evidence to support this image effect, nevertheless, leaves this factor unproven.

Image improvement has long been regarded as one of the significant long-term benefits of a Garden Festival in its motivation (DoE,1990). However, there are two different types of image effects, which may have been confused and therefore need clarification. One is the image of the Festival itself. Visitors may be very impressed with the Festival, as at Liverpool, but this can only demonstrate that a Festival, as a temporary tourism event, is attractive and successful.

The other is the image of the Festival's host area. By launching a Garden Festival, it is intended that the host area will get an opportunity of giving visitors a new impression of the area to replace the old image of a declined industrial area. However, any potential private developers would take account of factors which affect the locality, such as road access, transport provision, physical and social infrastructure and the environment (not only the site itself). Thus, what counts more in attracting private developers is the provision of good infrastructure rather than the glamour of the Festival event.

It seems that a disproportionate amount of the total cost of Garden Festivals has gone to create the Festivals as temporary tourist events rather than to improve the "hardware" environment. In other words, in terms of Garden Festival expenditure, the emphasis has been put on the

image of the Festival rather than the image of the local area. Yet, it is the latter which is more effective in helping the long-term urban regeneration of the locality.

#### **4.3.3 Weaknesses of the First Four Garden Festivals and Possible Reforms**

Garden Festivals have undoubtedly delivered benefits to the local areas and the local communities. However, the cost has also been extremely high. Evidence from the first four Garden Festivals suggests that they had the following shortcomings:

a. **ambiguous objectives.** Promoted as urban regeneration schemes, the Garden Festivals often aimed at a number of objectives, of which not all are necessarily central to urban regeneration, such as horticulture. This resulted in a distraction of the Garden Festival from its intended function, which is urban regeneration;

b. **inefficient use of resources.** Of the total costs of a Garden Festival project, about three quarters were used for the tourism element, which tends to boost the image of a local area. But the Festival as a tourism attraction only lasted about six months;

c. **inconsistency of short-term and long-term objectives.** Generally, Garden Festival companies had been more concerned with the short-term interests and successes, rather than the long-term benefits sought by local authorities, which

often had only limited direct influence over the disposal of Festival funds;

d. lack of co-ordination of land use planning and transport provision. This undermines the attraction of the site for development. For example, the construction of a permanent central spine road at Liverpool did not take place until some time after the Festival event.

If there is to be a second series of Garden Festivals and if these weaknesses are to be overcome and the cost-effectiveness to be improved, then some fundamental changes in the current practice are considered to be necessary:

a. longer events. Instead of temporary events, longer-lasting Garden Festivals, reflecting the specific cultural background of the area could be more appropriate in terms of enhancing the image improvement effect and giving this time to mature and gain impact. Accordingly, the construction of the Festival's facilities should be designed for much longer use, and the facilities should be open to the public for several years, or even permanently. In this way, the initial capital cost may be somewhat higher, but the image improvement, publicity, and popularity of the area would be greatly enhanced. Furthermore, since the Garden Festivals have been held in depressed areas, where such facilities are often lacking, such a permanent provision would be welcomed by the local community, and the facilities themselves could

form part of a regeneration project;

b. **emphasis on land reclamation.** While it is better in some cases to develop a permanent Garden Festival, it may be more appropriate in others to initiate a land reclamation scheme on its own, which would be much less costly (as has occurred with the Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration discussed later in this thesis).

If a part of the expenditure saved from a full-scale Festival event is invested in transportation and infrastructure, greater attraction to private developers and investors would be achieved than is evident through the current sequence of Garden Festival projects. Nevertheless, such an approach would not generate as much nation-wide publicity for the area concerned as would a Garden Festival; neither would it be as "high profile" for the Government of the day.

#### **4.3.4 Maximisation of the Long-term Benefits of Garden Festivals in Their Present Format**

Garden Festivals in their present format may not be the best form of urban regeneration schemes in terms of their cost-effectiveness, and significant changes have been suggested in 4.3.3 above. However, decisions are not always made purely on the basis of cost-effectiveness. If further Garden Festivals are to be staged in their present format as



urban regeneration projects, the following aspects should be incorporated wherever possible to maximise the long-term benefits of the Festival:

a. close co-operation between the Festival Company and local authorities

A practical, single-purpose Garden Festival Company to plan, organise and market the Festival would achieve results more quickly than a local authority. In addition Council representation on the company ensures that the local community retains a feeling of "ownership" of the Festival. This is in contrast to an agency such as an Urban Development Corporation running the Festival (as in the case of Liverpool) which has been criticised (DoE 1990) for the lack of local involvement which in turn resulted in political confrontation with the local authority. Even if this political dimension is ignored, an agency such as a UDC has to disperse its energies across a wide range of responsibilities in which a Garden Festival has to take its place. In contrast, the single-purpose agency is able to focus entirely on establishing and managing the Festival event.

In most cases, the Garden Festival Company regards the Festival primarily as a tourism event, and therefore seeks its success in terms of high-profile tourism. However local authorities expect a Garden Festival to be a major urban regeneration project; they seek its success in terms of

permanent job creation. However, in the present format, local authorities' power over the use of Festival expenditure has been limited. The Garden Festival companies, understandably, would prioritise investment in enhancing the quality of the event itself before paving the way for long-term development of the site. Therefore, while a single-purpose Festival Company is more efficient in managing the tourism-related Garden Festival projects, close links with, and greater participation of, the local authorities are also vital. If the long-term benefits are to be maximised, balance between Festival efficiency and a wider consideration of local economic regeneration should be sought.

**b. site in public ownership**

As the freeholder of the site, a local authority has the opportunity to plan and market the site's after-use development in a way suited to its own strategic plans, as was the case at Stoke and Gateshead. However, if the site is in private ownership, as at Glasgow, its owner can dominate the after-use strategy for the site. In such a case, the local authority has less influence over the long-term development of the site.

**c. an overall regeneration scheme for the area**

The Garden Festival should be planned as an integral part of

an urban regeneration strategy, as was the case at Gateshead, in order to avoid the difficulty which is likely to arise in respect of the after-use development of the site. For instance, at Liverpool, the Garden Festival was, to some extent, isolated from the local economic development strategy. For example, Merseyside Development Corporation did not incorporate the site into its local strategy until 1986. One result of this was that the central spine road was not built until long after the closure of the Festival, as noted above. This acted as a deterrent to its after-use development.

A problem which is likely to be encountered in the after-use development of a Festival site is the lack of transportation infrastructure. Generally located in areas of derelict land with poor access, Garden Festivals often have to develop new access or to enhance existing access roads. This cannot be achieved if Garden Festivals are treated as isolated projects.

#### **d. early completion of an after-use strategy**

The after-use should be decided at an early stage of the Festival development programme. This will then influence the planning, implementation and management of the Festival itself, and consequently the landscaping and infrastructuring of the site could, to a larger extent, match its after-use development. This was the case at Gateshead.

Where the after-use has not been settled early, as was the cases with Liverpool and Stoke, time was wasted (at Stoke, two and a half years delay in implementing the after-use development) and unnecessary costs incurred for the maintenance of the Festival site.

e. public-private partnership

There are essentially two types of private contribution to the Festival. One is private sponsorship, which was common in every case; the other is the private sectors' involvement in developing the site to make it more suitable for after-use development, as in the case of Gateshead. Public-private partnership in both Festival construction and Festival site development should be encouraged in order to achieve greater results.

These suggestions derived from the study of the first four Garden Festivals should be useful to following Festivals in their pursuit of maximum long-term benefits. Of course the special circumstances of each Festival must be considered when incorporating the suggestions. In the following section, the latest Garden Festival, Garden Festival Wales at Ebbw Vale, is studied in the context of its special features and the lessons drawn from the previous Garden Festivals.

#### 4.4 THE 1992 NATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL AT EBBW VALE

##### 4.4.1 Background to the Ebbw Vale Festival

Ebbw Vale (location see Fig.4.5) was one of the nine bids to the host of 1992 National Garden Festival put forward to the Welsh Office in 1985. Altogether, ten districts - a quarter of the Welsh total - were involved in the competition for this huge-investment project. Four of the bids were shortlisted in March 1986 (Cornock,1986), including Ebbw Vale, Cardiff, Llansamlet (Swansea) and Shotton. Some details of the initial proposals are as follows:

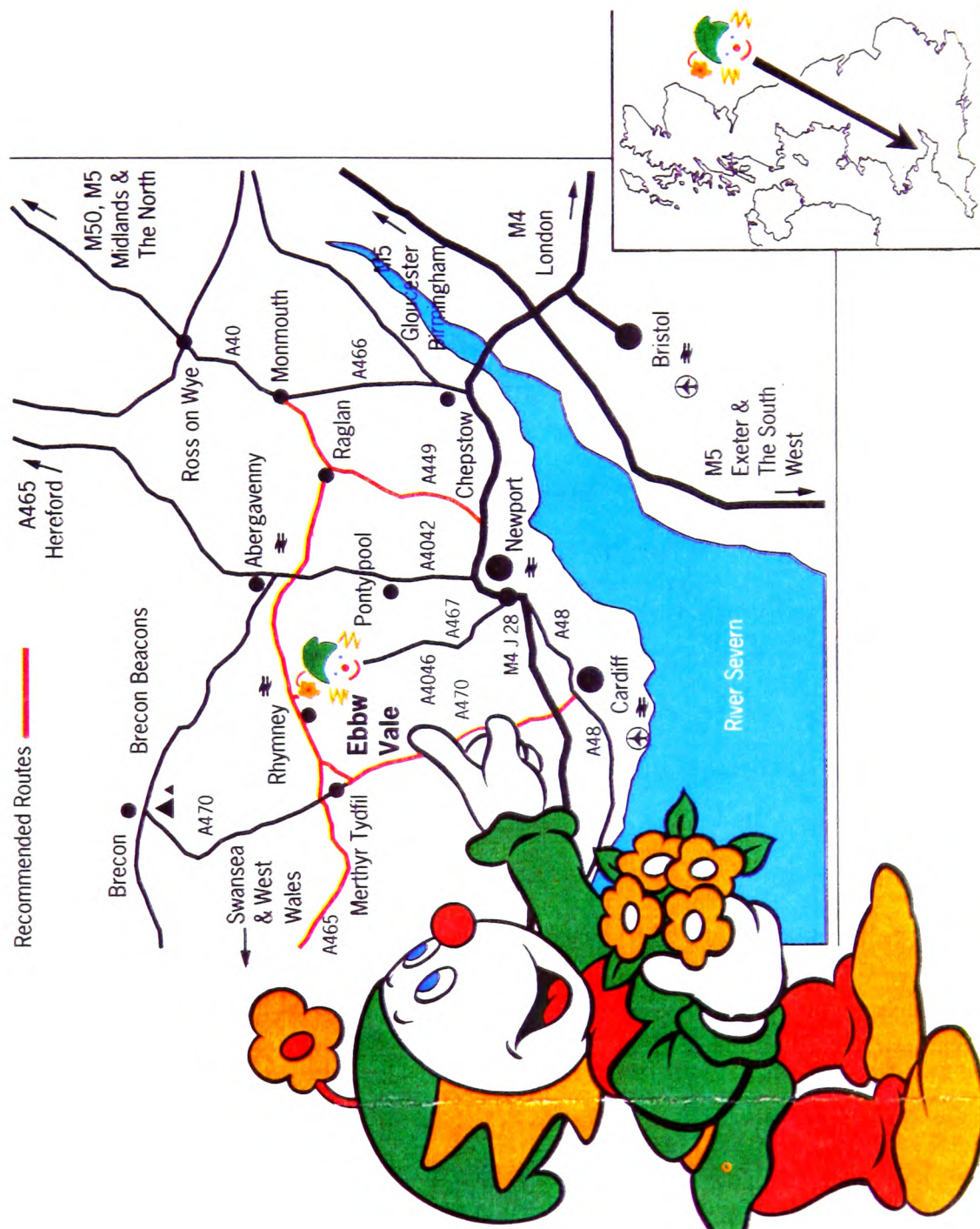
##### Shortlisted proposals for Garden Festival 1992

| Site       | Area     | Investment    | Bidder                                      |
|------------|----------|---------------|---|
| Ebbw Vale  | 336 Acre | £30.2 Million | Gwent C.C. & Blaenau Gwent B.C.             |
| Cardiff    | 342 Acre | £14 Million   | South Glamorgan C.C. & Cardiff City Council |
| Llansamlet | 200 Acre | £23 million   | Swansea City Council & West Glamorgan C.C.  |
| Shotton    | 245 Acre | £27 Million   | Alyn & Deeside D.C.                         |

Source: Johnston 1985 and Evans 1986

An investigation by Exhibition Consultants Ltd. on the shortlisted bids, commissioned by the Welsh Office, rated

Fig. 4.5 Location of Ebbw Vale



the Swansea proposal the first, and Ebbw Vale bid the last. The conclusion of the consultant's report is, "A decision (by Welsh Office) in favour of Ebbw Vale holding the National Garden Festival '92 would lean towards sentimental rather than hard-nosed commercial interests." and "The Festival here is a riskier exercise than in the other venues". It recognised the strength of Swansea's site as "access by rail, road and foot to the site is by far the best of the four submissions; Swansea's team learned much from their experience when short-listed two years ago (for the previous Garden Festival)" (Chrystal,1986).

However, it was announced in November 1986 that Ebbw Vale had been chosen by the Welsh Office to host the 1992 Garden Festival. The choice was reportedly considered to be made on the basis of Ebbw Vale's desperate need for help. The Festival was seen as a unique means of creating thousands of jobs, which the hard-pressed Valleys desperately need. The other over-riding argument was considered to be that Cardiff, Swansea and Shotton had all had investment in recent years, therefore the Valleys should be given the opportunity of the Garden Festival (Evans,1986).

Meanwhile, the Welsh Office discounted criticism of poor communication to the area by pointing out that the site was close to the Heads of Valleys road which would offer a scenic route to Wales (ibid.).

The Ebbw Vale site was composed of two complementary land

areas: the first was the derelict valley floor formerly occupied by Ebbw Vale's Steelworks and Waunllwyd Colliery, covering 236 acres, and the second a hillside "hinterland" covering near 100 acres. Following closure of the steel making division in 1970s, the steel plant and buildings had stood largely defunct and, according to Blaenau Gwent Borough Council, represented possibly the region's top-priority reclamation site (see Plate 3 and Plate 4). The hillside area rose more than 700 feet from the valley floor, giving virtually an aerial view of the whole Festival site (Johnston,1985).

The land of the site was paid for by Gwent County Council and Blaenau Gwent Borough Council. Additionally the WDA was responsible for the land reclamation which cost about £20 million. The three parties, i.e. the County Council, Borough Council and the WDA, were jointly committed to look after the end-use of the site, and the profits from the sale of the site would be divided proportionately among them (Powell,interview,1991).

The Festival arrangement for the site showed a mixture of exhibition areas, theme gardens, tree areas, a monorail loop linking the various elements, and a hillside chairlift to a quarry feature and aquaslide(Bi-Design,1986). (see Plate 5 and Plate 6).

The planned after-use of the site included an industrial



Plate 3 and plate 4



Ebbw Vale National Garden Festival under  
Construction:  
1990(top) and 1991 (bottom)



plate 5 and plate 6



Ebbw Vale National Garden Festival  
Completed Development (1992)

park in a parkland setting, a reorganised rail terminus, and a residential area, but with the southern end of the site continuing in recreational use (ibid.). The plan was later revised and detailed, including a mixture of housing, B1 (light industry and business park) space and open space. About one-third of the site would be left as permanent open space (Fig.4.6). Temporary landscaping would be left in place on the uncommitted sites until such time as development was commenced; it was felt that this landscaping was an important means of attracting development (Cowan,1992).

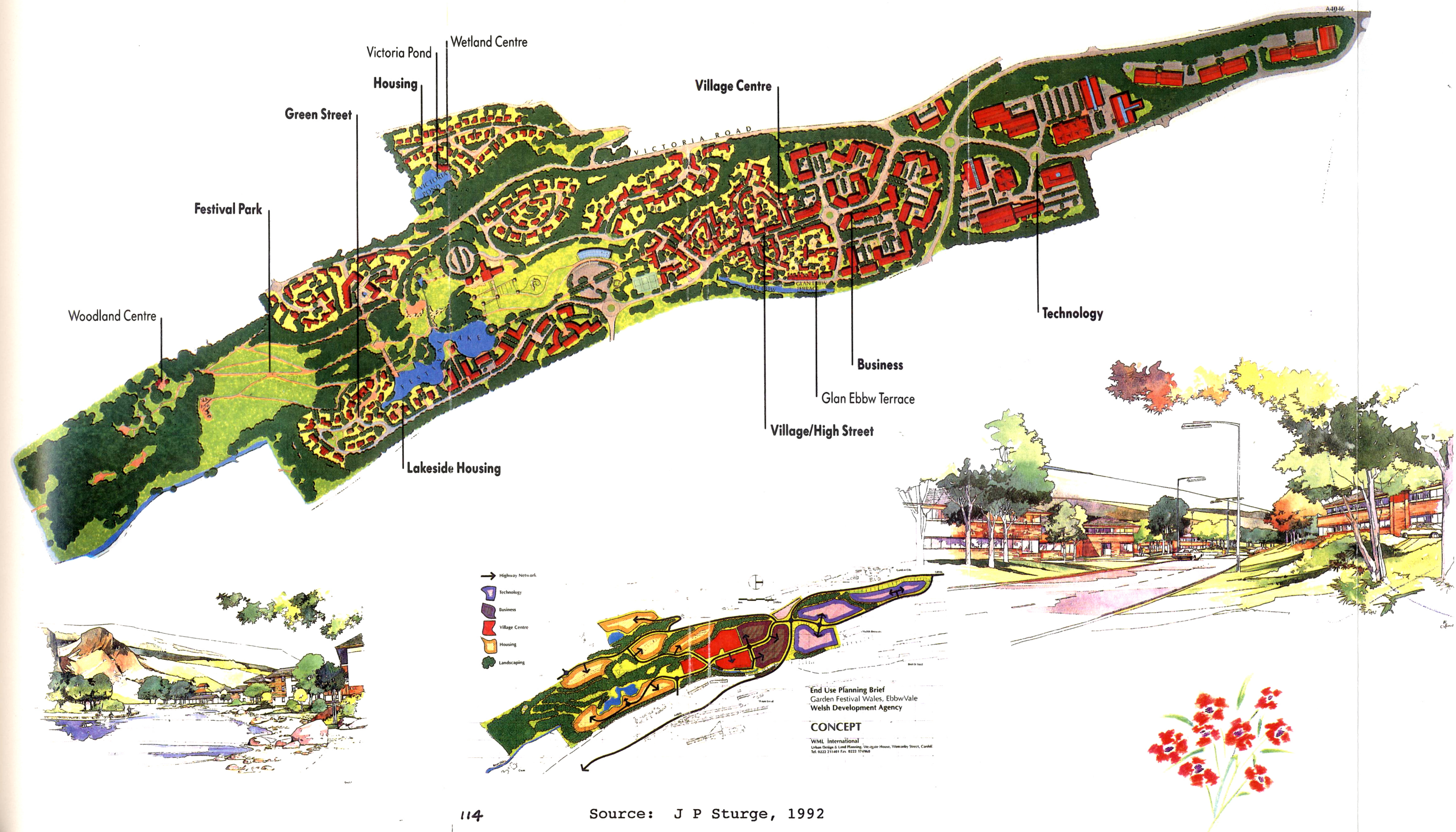
#### **4.4.2 Objectives and Operation of the Festival and Expectations of Benefits**

Following the award of the Garden Festival to Ebbw Vale in November 1986, a company, 1992 National Garden Festival Ltd., was set up in June 1987, to design and manage the Festival. Gwent County Council and Blaenau Gwent Borough Council were the two share-holders. Lynn Powell, the (then) Chief Planning Officer of the Borough Council, who co-ordinated the successful bid for the Festival, was appointed the Executive Director of the Company and seconded for two years for the job (Western Mail Report, 1987a). Later, Bob Webb, who had a tourist industry background, took over the responsibility.

The Board of the Company comprised 14 members, eight from



Figure 4.6 Ebbw Vale National Garden Festival:  
After-use proposals





the two local authorities, and the others from the WDA, Wales Tourist Board and the private sector. During the Festival planning and construction period, the Board members met on a monthly basis.

The initial aims of the company were the early reclamation of the site for the Festival and its promotion as a long-term investment opportunity (ibid.).

The total investment for the Garden Festival was over £60 million, including about £20 million for the land reclamation. It was not surprising that there had been a high expectation for the benefits that the Festival would bring to the local area and the South Wales.

**Job Creation:** this had probably been the most attractive aspect to the local people where unemployment had been extremely high. It was expected to generate about 1000 temporary jobs during the development phase and 1,000 during the Festival itself (Jones,1991). More important was the prospect for permanent jobs. Initially, this was projected to be around 2,100 by the Borough Council (Chrystal,1986). Five years later, the figure was revised as 1,300 as pledged by David Hunt, the Welsh Secretary in 1991 (Jones,1991). Now, the after-use scheme is intended to generate 1,000 permanent jobs (Cowan,1992).

**Image boost:** the high-profile Festival was expected to attract at least 2 million visitors to the Valleys.

According to the Festival Company, "The Festival will be a most effective medium for dispelling the traditional low image of the Borough and the South Wales Valleys as being a dirty, heavily industrialised area with poor-quality physical environment." (Bi-Design,1986). The image boost was expected to impress two categories of visitors: general tourists and potential private investors. As Mr Peter Walker saw it:"We look to 1992 as a rather unique opportunity, as we expect many people to come, not only to attend the Garden Festival, but to all the other beautiful parts of Wales." In this, he stressed the fact that the tourism industry in Wales employed 95,000 people - compared to 7,000 then employed in the coal industry. On the second category of visitors, he pointed out:"we will have thousands of people coming from overseas to visit, and they will see a huge transformation...we must be able to take overseas investors to good hotels and good restaurants, and to offer them leisure activities such as golf and sailing." (Shankland,1989a).

This point of view was reflected in a publicity brochure by the Festival company. It suggests that "Visitors will be given a new perspective of the Valleys and this will help to attract private investment, and therefore to encourage the diversification and widening of the Valleys' economic base and to contribute to their regeneration" (Bi-Design,1986).

It was based on these two aspects that a further expectation

was held:

**Catalyst to the Valleys regeneration :** this expectation was clearly expressed by the Welsh Secretary, David Hunt, when he said the Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale "is going to be not only the biggest tourist event in Wales and the U.K. in 1992 but will be a major catalyst for economic development and urban renewal in the South Wales Valleys." (Jones,1991). In addition to generating 1,300 permanent jobs, he claimed, the Festival would also bring a long-term legacy of new housing, landscaped public amenity land and a revitalised community spirit to help the area seize the opportunities of the 1990s and into the 21st century(ibid.).

Whilst the Festival would undoubtedly bring benefits to the local community in terms of land reclamation, environment improvement, and gains from tourist expenditure, the above-mentioned three aspects are less certain. To examine what can be realistically expected from this Festival, the special features of this Festival have to be recognised first.

#### **4.4.3 Special Features of the Festival**

There is no doubt that the Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale had the potential to deliver benefits to decayed and depressed local areas as well as to the South Wales Valleys as a whole. However, the area has unique problems which might inhibit commercial and industrial redevelopment in

comparison with other Festival sites and other competing areas of South Wales. The special features of this Garden Festival are identified as:

**a. the setting**

Located in an area composed of "urban villages" at the head of the Valleys, this Garden Festival differed from its predecessors in that it could provide the visitors with a "three-dimensional" experience, which would be more exciting and attractive than could be expected in the dense urban environments of the previous Garden Festivals. However this feature brought two disadvantages to its after-use development.

(i). **Poor access.** With the valley running from north to south, road links direct to the site could only run between these compass points. There has no direct access from east or west. The only access to the site - via the A4046- was a low capacity road. The existing railway line from Newport to Ebbw Vale had been used only for freight traffic and would need improvement to permit passenger trains to travel to the heads of the Valleys. Although there had been early consideration of passenger trains running during the Festival period, eventually this did not materialise. Therefore access to motorways or main rail services was through Bristol, Cardiff and Newport. This difficult access would not be helpful in attracting inward investment.



Major traffic problems were reported during the Spring Bank Holiday week in May 1992 (Radio Wales News, 26th May), although these problems were not sustained.

(ii). **Physical constraints.** The Ebbw Vale site represented a marked contrast to previous Festival sites, all of which had been sited on basically flat locations. Being at the head of the Valleys, the Ebbw Vale site was a steep slope rather than a large flat area. This would exert some constraints on certain types of industrial and commercial development. Good access to different levels of the site would be very important in order to minimise the detrimental impact of this physical feature.

#### **b. conflicting objectives**

In contrast to its predecessors, which were mainly expected to have an impact limited to their own urban areas, Garden Festival Wales has been the "flagship" project of the Welsh Office and has been expected to be a catalyst to the regeneration of the whole of the Valleys. By attracting a considerable number of people to the Valleys, the Garden Festival was intended to provide an unique opportunity for the whole area to show off and dispose at last of its poor image of being dirty and heavily industrialised. However, it might be argued that to maximise the chances of this objective being met, and thereby attracting inward investment, the Garden Festival should have been sited at a relatively prosperous location, with convenient access to

the M4 and railway services.

Nonetheless, the Garden Festival provided a chance to bring considerable short-term and long-term benefits, such as land reclamation, environmental improvement, and temporary and permanent job creation to the host area. To meet this consideration, it was justified that the location should be in one of the poorest parts of the Valleys, such as Ebbw Vale, where help was most needed. However, these were two conflicting objectives and they could not both be fully accomplished.

In fact, the Welsh Office decision to award the Garden Festival to Ebbw Vale was criticised since, as mentioned earlier, the Welsh Office's consultants advised that the bid for Ebbw Vale was riskier than those from Swansea, Cardiff and Shotton. In fact, a Garden Festival may not be the most the cost-effective way of regenerating an area such as Ebbw Vale. Other urban regeneration mechanisms, for instance, large scale land reclamation and environmental improvement scheme, reflected by Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration (Discussed in section 5.2) might be more appropriate.

In addition to this conflict, a difference in priority of objectives also existed between the Garden Festival Company and the local authorities. From an interview with a representative of the Garden Festival Company

(Russell,1991), it is clear that priority was given by the Company to establishing the Festival as a tourist event. It is therefore not surprising that the after-use strategy of the site had not been finalised until shortly before the opening of the Festival. However, the local authorities, on the other hand, expected the Festival to act as regeneration catalyst and to create jobs for local people. This is clearly stated in the Blaenau Gwent Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy, ie, the primary objective of the Garden Festival " is to act as a catalyst to the long term regeneration of the Borough including the creation of both short term and long term job prospects and the Council will strive to ensure that that objective is clearly implemented." (Blaenau Gwent Borough Council,1990a). However, the Festival site itself cannot be used for immediate development without further expenditure on infrastructure and landscape.

### **c. weak private sector activity**

Weak private sector activity in the Valleys is another disadvantage for the after-use development of the site.

In the Valleys, the public sector, in most cases, is the main actor. This brings into question the principle of current government inner city policy, which is that the main role in urban regeneration should be reserved for the private sector. The public sector's role is to facilitate private development by spending a limited amount of public

money on such items as infrastructure, in order to "pump prime" the market. This philosophy was exemplified in London Dockland and in some other Garden Festival sites, such as Stoke, Glasgow and Gateshead. However, in securing the after-use of the Ebbw Vale site, a combination of public sector agencies including the WDA and local authorities will play the most significant role in the after-use of the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival site. This, while probably failing to meet the principles of current inner city policy, would nevertheless ensure at least some development of the Garden Festival site and can be viewed as one of the advantages falling to this Festival.

In addition, a further restraint of any private sector involvement is the national economic situation prevailing in the early 1990's which may act as a deterrent to successful after-use development.

#### **4.4.4 Anticipated Benefits**

As mentioned earlier, during most of the period that this study was being undertaken, the Garden Festival was in course of preparation. Initially this section was devoted to identifying the benefits which could be realistically expected. At the time of submission of the thesis, the Garden Festival is over and some of the identified benefits have already been delivered. This section is, however, retained, and the discussion on the benefits may largely be

taken as a review or summary.

With considerable investment accruing to the Garden Festival itself and the continuous efforts made by various bodies, the following benefits have already been achieved or can at least be realistically expected:

a. the whole Festival site has been reclaimed faster and with a far higher standard of landscaping and environmental improvement than otherwise would have happened, and therefore is more attractive to developers;

b. temporary tourism has produced economic benefit. The latest information confirmed that 2 million visitors were attracted during the Festival event (Thomas, telephone interview, 1992). The expenditure from the visitors benefited local businesses, although previous experience suggests that Festival sponsors (in this case, Gwent County Council and Blaenau Gwent Borough Council) may suffer an operating deficit, but this information will only be available in early 1993 (Rowlands, telephone interview, 1992).

c. the environmental improvement of the site has helped the retention of local jobs. For example, Welsh Brewers was looking for a new site for its Ebbw Vale distribution depot. The company decided to relocate to the Southern end of the Festival site (Powell, interview, 1991).

d. Ebbw Vale as a whole had benefited from better roads and

landscaping. There had been a general trend towards owners improving the appearance of their homes, and there had been some financial spin-off through the provision of accommodation to visitors (Cowan,1992).

e. the publicity given to the Festival might be expected to have helped change, to a greater or lesser extent, the image of the Valleys (not only the immediate local area); however, this is difficult to substantiate as yet.

f. the Festival site has provided reclaimed land with a much improved environment, and in principle it should need to compete more effectively with other areas in Wales and the U.K. in attracting private developers. The framework provided by the Valleys Initiative and the involvement of the WDA and other public authorities in the after-use would improve the likelihood of long-term benefits being delivered.

#### **4.4.5 Maximisation of Long-Term Benefits**

However, efforts should be made to maximise the long-term benefits of this Garden Festival. The study of the lessons of the previous Festivals and the specific circumstances of Ebbw Vale has lead to the following recommendations for maximising the long-term benefits:

a. to improve accessibility. if significant development is

to be secured it is essential to improve access conditions both inside and outside the Festival site. In particular, the importance of the Cwm bypass in this respect has been noted previously. Failure to achieve such improvements within the near future will impose a significant brake on the momentum for development.

Within the site, because it is steeply sloping, good access to different levels should be provided in order to minimise the physical constraints. This could be difficult to achieve at this stage because the after-use strategy was not finalised early enough, ie, before the construction of much of the Festival;

b. promote partnership between the WDA, local authorities, other public and private organisations. The WDA intends to provide advance office accommodation at the site and some social housing is to be constructed by a Housing Association. However, to maximise opportunities, further public resources need to be put into the site, which may be secured by promoting an enhanced partnership between the local authorities and the WDA;

c. make use of the Festival name as a means of marketing in connection with its after-use. This has been successfully used at Stoke. As the name has been well publicised, it will promote the attraction of the site, therefore enhancing the possibility of it being further developed;

d. maintain as much as possible of the Festival landscaping, buildings and features. This will remind people of the Festival and will slow down the fading of the image-effect after closure. Those areas which are not to be retained as permanent open space are to be temporarily landscaped until development takes place. This in turn will maintain the value of the site both as a public amenity and as a catalyst for long-term development;

e. maximise the spin-off benefits of the Festival. Further off-site development and environmental improvements in the vicinity of the site should be encouraged to maximise the spin-off benefits of the Festival.



## CHAPTER 5. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO URBAN REGENERATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the previous chapter, Garden Festival Wales is the biggest urban regeneration project in the Valleys. However, despite its value as a tourist event, it may not be a cost-effective way of securing long-term regeneration. On the other hand, a number of much less costly projects with more explicit objectives have been promoted by the WDA and local authorities. Each of them has displayed different features. In this chapter, three such projects representing two different partnership models, are examined and contrasted with Garden Festival Wales.

The first of these, the Joint Venture, is rare in Wales, and only one such example in Llanelli is anywhere near established enough for some kind of analysis to take place. The second model, the Informal Consortium, is disparate in nature. Consequently two distinctly different examples have been chosen from Rhondda and Abertillery, respectively.

## 5.2 THE "JOINT VENTURE" PROJECT: SOUTH LLANELLI COASTAL AREA REGENERATION

### 5.2.1 Examination of the Project and Its Organisation

The Llanelli Joint Venture, launched in 1990, is one of the three such projects in the industrial South Wales, the other two being the Cynon Valley Joint Venture and the Merthyr Tydfil Joint Venture, both established in late 1991. These all involve the reclamation of large areas of derelict land for new industrial, commercial and leisure uses whereby major economic change in an area is spearheaded by property development. Such property-led strategies have been exemplified in Salford Quays (Greater Manchester) and most of the Urban Development Corporation areas. Among the three joint ventures, the Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration project is the earliest in industrial South Wales (and, indeed, was the only one when this research was started in 1990), involving a partnership between WDA and the Llanelli Borough Council. Hence, as explained earlier, it lends itself to analysis more readily than those situated at the heart of the Valleys.

The Borough of Llanelli, located in the coastal area of South Wales with a population of 25,000 covers some 90 square miles and combines a fine and interesting coastline with a rural hinterland. There is direct access to the M4 and to a high speed main rail line through South Wales to

London.

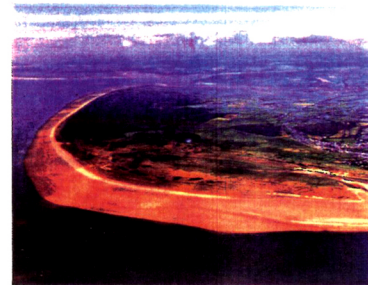
Over the years, as a result of economic structural change, both internationally and nationally, the dominant coal and heavy industries of the area have declined, and the whole area of the Llanelli Borough has suffered from an extremely high level of unemployment and the environmental degradation of extensive areas adjacent to the coast.

Urban regeneration has therefore been high on the agenda of the Borough Council. The fundamental objective of the regeneration of the Llanelli area is "to seek to improve and broaden the economic base of the Borough of Llanelli, in order to help create a diversified local economy capable of dynamic self-generation and sustained growth." (LDR International, 1989). Thus, it has an obvious economic focus.

Within this context, the initiative of regenerating South Llanelli - the most degraded coastal area of Wales - was instigated by the Borough Council as part of an overall strategy of regeneration (Fig.5.1). The size of the area and the problems involved attracted both the Urban Renewal and Derelict Land Units of the WDA (see Fig.5.2). A preliminary study by LDR International Consultants, commissioned jointly by the WDA and the Borough Council, resulted in A Development Strategy (ibid.), which proposed a range of developments including a marina, fresh water



# Llanelli Coast – The key to one of the most exciting developments of the 90's



**Cefn Sidan** – European award winning "Blue Flag" beach – the only one in Wales and one of just 29 in Britain to be given the award in 1990, covering water quality, safety and beach management.

## Burry Port

Plans include a marina, housing and hotel development – all in keeping with the existing harbour which is used extensively by fishermen and local boating enthusiasts.

## Greenway

Plans for landscaped corridor with water features as part of a central link to the coastal scheme

## Sandy Water Park

Attractive landscaping, with 16 acre freshwater lake as the focal point, has transformed this area – formerly an industrial site. Quality housing development will be taking place here, with plans for pub, restaurant and boating club.

The potential of the Llanelli Coast is remarkable. There are few other areas in the UK where such an area of land, backing onto a sandy shore, and in an urban environment, is available for quality development.



## Water Park

As the name implies, water is the key feature here. It is an area which will provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for high quality employment uses.

## Morfa Park

This will be the centre of the district, with appropriate facilities and selected retail outlets. A public park is planned for this area, and will also include new homes.

## Morfa'r Ynys Links

A prestigious 18 hole golf course is an integral part of the overall design strategy. The links will incorporate executive housing which will be built in an exceptionally attractive setting.

## Wildfowl Centre

Great care has been taken to establish the Penclacwydd wildfowl centre. Developed in conjunction with the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, the aim was to cater equally for wildlife, ornithologists, visitors and local people.

## North Dock

Llanelli's dock was built during the last century to handle shipments of anthracite coal. Now it offers exciting potential for sea and dockside housing, with leisure, office and hotel facilities



This view looking west along the Llanelli Coast has the Sandy Water Park lake in the foreground. This was one of the first land reclamation projects and is now an attractive development area.

The Llanelli Coast Venture is a partnership between Llanelli Borough Council and the Welsh Development Agency, set up to promote the regeneration of Llanelli Coast – a unique development opportunity of national significance but for the benefit of the local community.

Over 750 acres of land has been assembled for new use along an eight mile sea frontage with outstanding environmental potential.

The vision – illustrated here – is already taking shape as the Venture fulfils its

commitment to transform land, once used for industry into an attractive place to live, work and play – and create quality sites primarily for private sector housing, commercial, and leisure development.

There is direct access to the M4, a high speed main rail line through South Wales to London, and a regional catchment population of 1.5 million.

Source: Welsh Development Agency

## Machynys Park

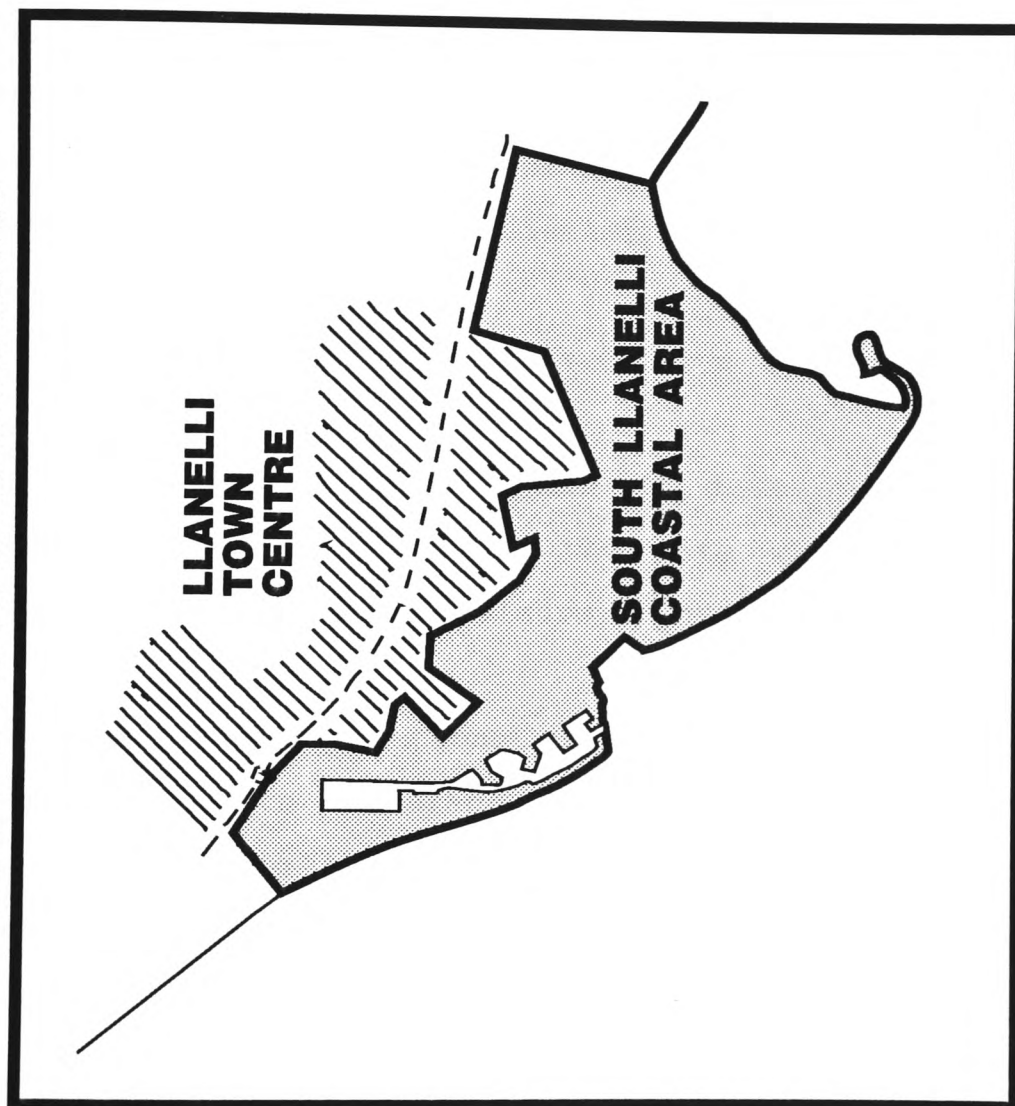
The housing development here will be set in parkland environs, backing on to an attractive golden beach. Extensive coast protection work will both protect, and enhance the sandy beaches.

## Penrhyn Village

In the Welsh language, Penrhyn means peninsula, and the mix of seaside housing and employment use development here will enjoy panoramic views of the estuary and the Gower Coast.



Fig. 5.2 LOCATION OF SOUTH LLANELLI COAST AREA  
IN RELATION TO LLANELLI TOWN CENTRE



lakes, a new canal, leisure, retail and business areas, golf courses and waterfront housing.

Llanelli Borough Council and the WDA entered into a five-year Joint Venture Agreement in 1990 to carry out the regeneration of South Llanelli Coast - a unique development opportunity of national significance but for the benefit of the local community. Five main objectives are identified in the Development Strategy for realising the potential of this area for economic and physical renewal:

- a. to reclaim and reuse a large area of featureless land;
- b. to bring forward a mix of development which will maximise the potential of the site whilst providing new housing employment and leisure opportunities;
- c. to provide a strong "sense of place" and community identity and to encourage links between South Llanelli and the surrounding communities in a way that complements the existing town;
- d. to promote development which will ensure a high quality of environment and which will establish South Llanelli as a significant area of waterside regeneration;
- e. to achieve the highest standards of design of all types of development.

This major scheme proposes to create a new waterfront for the former heavy industrial town of Llanelli on 600 acres of flat, featureless and semi-derelict land (see Fig.5.1). Lying between the town and the sea are (1) the old "workplace" of the town based on iron and steel manufacturing and tin-plate industries and the resulting slag tips; (2) degraded grazing land and beaches; (3) remnants of other industrial activity from the 1950's; and (4) decaying dockland areas.

The overall development is to be phased over a 20-year period. It is estimated that this will cost about £30 million of public money to lever the required private investment (Hall,interview,1991). There are to be four main development areas.

- a. mixed use and housing areas;
- b. a low density housing and golf course area, linking with freshwater lakes to form a major landscape feature, acting as a buffer to a nature conservation area;
- c. a leisure and business area based on a waterpark;
- d. a marina/housing mixed use area, involving a range of leisure, commercial and housing uses based on the existing North Dock (LDR International,1989).

This Joint Venture is the first major regeneration scheme in which the WDA has participated directly. The establishment of the partnership depended mainly on the WDA's interest and determination and there were several reasons why it chose Llanelli as a partner. Firstly, good working relationships between the Agency and the Borough already existed before the establishment of the Joint Venture, and the WDA believed that this would be an advantage. Secondly, the majority of the 600 acre waterside area was owned by Llanelli Borough Council and therefore the project was capable of being implemented immediately. Finally, the area was large enough to embrace a complex development (Hall,interview,1991).

By July 1991, the venture partners, Llanelli Borough Council and the Welsh Development Agency, had already invested £10 million in land purchase, reclamation, infrastructure and landscaping, and they had also earmarked £30 million over the following 10 years to create quality sites suitable for development. Of the first £10 million, the WDA contributed 65% and the Borough 35%. The land will eventually be marketed to attract both public and private developers, and the receipts from the sale of the land will be divided in proportion to the investment (Hall, interview,1991). By October 1992 investment by WDA alone stands at £10 million (Hall,telephone interview,1992).

To date, some progress has been made on the disposal of the site. Development of social housing by the Swansea-based



Family Housing Association has commenced to meet local need for low-cost accommodation; Bailey Homes are shortly to commence a £6 million private housing scheme on 8 acres at Sandy Water Park; the WDA is hopeful of disposing of another site to a private-sector developer in the near future (ibid.).

Such a contractual Joint Venture is a legal agreement signed by the WDA and the Borough Council. This provides for equal representation on the Management Board. Eight seats on the Board were divided equally between the two partners. The Council are represented by the Chief Executive, the Borough Planning Officer and two councillors from the South Llanelli area, whilst four officers represent the WDA. Within the Llanelli Council itself an interdepartmental project team has been established in order to ensure close internal liaison. The major statutory authorities and other interested parties have been drawn together at a series of "planning workshops" held locally to test the issues in more detail.

The legal status of the Joint Venture ensures that the project is not subject to any changes of political power, and the large amount of investment from the WDA is also a very significant contribution to the local area and therefore the partnership arrangement is attractive to the Borough Council (Priest, interview, 1991).

### 5.2.2 Comparison with Garden Festival Wales

A comparison between this project and the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival is relevant. Clearly, they have some common characteristics: both are publicly-funded, involving land reclamation and environmental improvement in order to attract private investment. In the Llanelli project, landscape and infrastructure on the site are specifically intended for the purpose of securing industrial, commercial and residential development. Good access has been given priority: a new link road costing £3 million was paid for by the Council by means of an "additional spending allocation" in relation to a "Project of Regional and National Importance" (Priest, interview, 1991). Additionally, a hierarchy of roads with sufficient traffic capacity is being constructed around the new link road (ibid.). Consequently, the reclaimed site at Llanelli can be expected to have greater competitiveness in attracting private development than the Garden Festival Wales site.

Garden Festival Wales has wider objectives than the South Llanelli project. However, in terms of urban regeneration, the only extra benefits seem to be some short-term improvements and the "image" effect, the latter still being questionable as discussed in section 4.3.2 previously. The extra cost of the Garden Festival seems to have the short-term benefits as the only certain gain.

### 5.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Partnership Model

The Joint Venture involving local authorities and WDA is advantageous in terms of decision-making: it enables the best use to be made of the former's local knowledge and the latter's financial and technical competence. Thus the support and participation of the local communities and the assistance of the expertise of the WDA can be secured. Both are vital to the success of a regeneration scheme. The Joint Venture model thus eliminates the shortcomings of "top-down" or "bottom-up" styles of decision-making in urban regeneration.

The legal status of the Joint Venture is also valuable. As this ensures that the project is not subject to any changes of political power, it injects confidence into potential private investors in the future success of the project and thus helps to attract private sector investment. Likewise, the support and enthusiasm of the local communities can be sustained.

A further strength of this partnership model lies in that, because the project has and keeps to a clear-cut objective - land reclamation and environmental improvement - to attract private investment, any conflict in objectives is avoided, and an efficient use of resources can be achieved.

Reservations about the model lie in its formality. It is not as easy to establish as an informal consortium (which is discussed later). Furthermore, the WDA is not keen to be involved in Joint Ventures for small projects. Therefore, the model is only likely to be adopted for relatively large projects and in a limited number of local areas.

### 5.3 THE "INFORMAL CONSORTIUM" PROJECT (I): RHONDDA HERITAGE PARK

#### 5.3.1 Background to the Project

The Rhondda Valleys have played a major part in the history of the South Wales mining industry and have evolved traditions which have become internationally known.

However, as discussed in Section 2.2, there has been a consistent and severe decline in the number of working mines in recent years. In 1983, two of the three remaining collieries in the Rhondda, Lewis Merthyr and Ty Mawr, were closed, leaving only Maerdy, which was eventually closed in 1986. The 1983 closure had signalled the imminent loss of all mines in the area, which was once occupied by 60 working pits. The closure also led to the getting together of a number of people who were concerned to retain within the Valleys some reminder of the industry which has shaped so much of the area's history. Plans for a heritage centre on the sites of the two closed collieries thus emerged (Hood, interview, 1991).

The potential was also recognised by the local authorities concerned (Mid Glamorgan County Council, Rhondda Borough Council and Taff-Ely Borough Council) who, in collaboration with the WDA and Wales Tourist Board, set out to examine the

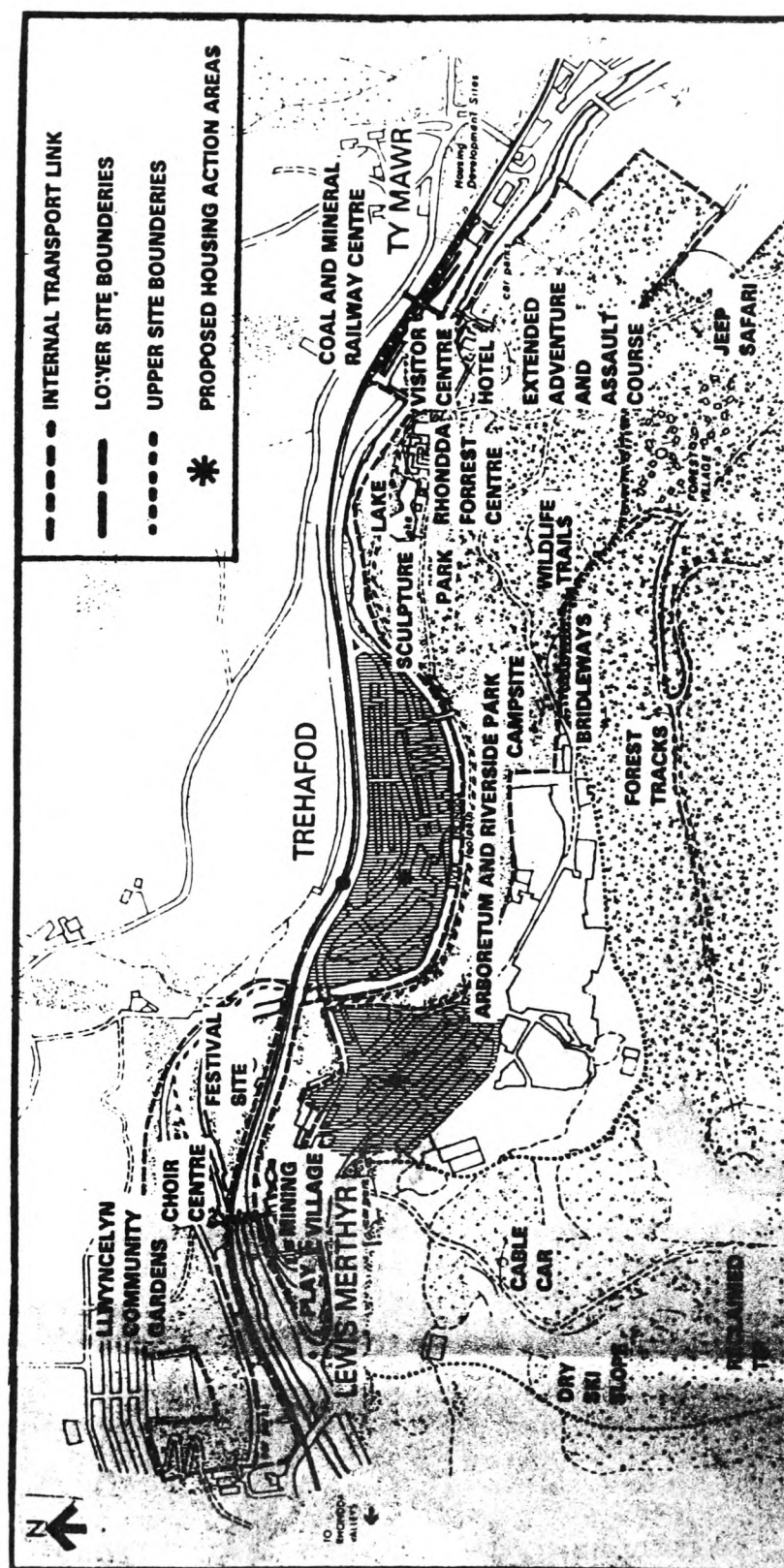
range of potential future uses for the recently abandoned sites.

A number of confidential studies, to which the researcher was allowed access, examined the problems and opportunities posed by the sites and the range of potential uses, including housing, industry and recreation. These concluded that the greatest opportunity lay in capitalising on the area's unique traditions and industrial history and the world-wide recognition of the name "Rhondda" (ibid.).

In this context, a project was proposed for the creation of a centre that would carry the themes of heritage and countryside in the form of the Rhondda Heritage Park (see Fig.5.3). The principal aim was to create a major new tourist attraction for South Wales that would be part of the overall regeneration of the region, by creating jobs and providing a more attractive environment to live in and visit.

In 1985, when bids for the 1992 National Garden Festival were invited, Rhondda and Taff-Ely Borough Councils jointly submitted a proposal for the Garden Festival to be held on the two colliery sites at Lewis Merthyr and Ty Mawr. In this proposal, the coal heritage was strongly stressed, and after-use was firmly based on tourism. It was hoped that the Festival would reinforce the heritage potential of the sites, and Rhondda planners reportedly saw the Festival as "the icing on the cake" (Johnson,1985).

Fig.5.3 Proposals of the Rhondda Heritage Park



Source: South Wales Echo, April 23, 1986

The bid for the 1992 Festival was not successful. However, in 1988 an informal consortium was established to press on with the heritage project. The consortium involved five parties: the three constituent local authorities (Rhondda and Taff-Ely Borough Councils and Mid Glamorgan County Council), the WDA and the Wales Tourist Board.

According to the master plan, the Park is to be based on two major sites: the Lewis Merthyr Colliery site and the Barry Sidings site, linked by a riverside park. Many themes and events are proposed. These include The Story of Coal, The Choral Centre, 1920s Village Street, etc., for the Lewis Merthyr site, and Forestry, Countryside, Waterside, etc. for the Barry sidings and adjacent Hetty sites. The Park is scheduled for completion in the mid 1990s and the initial aim is for it to become one of the leading tourist attractions in Britain (Rhondda Heritage Park publicity material).

The overall objective of the project has been promoted so as to assist the regeneration of the Rhondda Valleys through the creation of a major tourism, recreational and heritage project. The main benefits this project could deliver to the local area are envisaged as:

- a. it will tackle the dereliction associated with the colliery sites and thereby transform the adverse image of the Rhondda area;



b. it will attract certain numbers of visitors to the area and help reverse the image of the area as being heavily industrialised in decline, and unattractive to work and live in, thereby helping bring in new industry;

c. it will create new jobs for local people in both the construction and the operation of the project; and

d. it will create an enhanced environment, and new recreation facilities for the local community.

#### **5.3.2 Organisation, Progress and Problems**

As mentioned earlier, the organisation responsible for the Rhondda Heritage Park is an informal consortium of five parties. The consortium is effected by a number of "control tiers". The top tier is the **Steering Group**. Comprising representatives of the five parties, the Steering Group holds the management control of the project. It meets every two months. Under the Steering Group is the **Officer Directing Group** which oversees all development and operational matters and reports directly to the Steering Group. The Officer Directing Group meets monthly, taking reports from the Development Officer and each of the working groups. The **Working Groups** are the element tier and have been set up to manage the development of the following key areas: planning and development, marketing, education and finance. The working groups comprise representatives from

the local authorities and appropriate agencies.

When the project was initiated, it was agreed that the net expenditure would be shared equally by the three local authorities but there has been no legal obligation for the local authorities to commit themselves to the project. (Hood,interview,1991). The project was included in the Valleys Programme 1988 and financial assistance of £500,000 for 1988-9 and approximately £1.5 million for the following two years was allocated (Welsh Office,1988). Funding was also obtained from Wales Tourist Board and European Regional Development Fund.

Private sector involvement has been in the form of private sponsorship and the construction of a 52-bedroom hotel by the Celtic Bay Group which was completed in September 1991 (Basini,1991) (see Plate 7 and Plate 8).

Development on site started in 1988 and by July 1989, the first phase of the project had been completed when the Visitor Centre, including an art gallery, a gift shop and a coffee shop, was opened to the public. This first phase cost about £3 million (Shankland,1989b).

The Labour Party's loss of control over the Taff-Ely Council following the May 1990 local elections signalled the beginning of a crisis in the informal consortium. Control passed to Plaid Cymru councillors who were less enthusiastic



Top: General View of Rhondda Heritage Park  
Bottom: Rhondda Heritage Park: Private Sector Investment

about the project. The Council's new policies concentrated on housing, public services etc., rather than high-profile schemes like the Rhondda Heritage Park (Pearce, interview,1991). The newly-elected Council now claimed that the Park was "burying the poor poll-tax payers under a crushing financial burden and robbing local authorities of the money needed to finance better services." (Basini,1991). In August 1990, Clayton Jones, a Plaid Cymru councillor of Taff-Ely Borough Council, reportedly criticised the tourism use of a "prime site" for industry and claimed it was a waste of resources(Dixon,1990).

Taff-Ely's new ruling coalition pledged to cut funding for the project in the summer of 1991. By then, £4.4 million had been spent, of which £400,000 was contributed by each of the three local authorities (Horton,1991). Further development was set to start at the Barry Sidings site, much of which has been in Taff-Ely's ownership. A further £314,000 was now required from each local authority. However, Taff-Ely Borough Council voted to withdraw from the consortium (Basini,1991). Instead, the Council proposed to develop the five acre site at Barry Sidings for industrial use (Owens,1991).

Rhondda Borough Council still maintained that "apart from building an attraction based on the past, the Heritage Park is an essentially forward-looking project and will be a focus for economic regeneration and job creation within the area" (May,interview,1991). In October 1991, Councillor Les

Rees, Chairman of Mid Glamorgan County Council, threatened to take legal action, claiming that Taff-Ely Council had a contractual as well as a moral obligation to stay with the project. In response, the Leader of Taff-Ely's ruling coalition group claimed that there was no trace of the original agreement, and that the obligation was founded on certain figures which clearly had not been met (Stokes,1991).

The withdrawal of Taff-Ely endangered the Park's future expansion, although the WDA announced its continued support for the project in December 1991, with a further £750,000 provided for the further development of the Park (Anon,1991c). Rhondda Heritage Park was regarded by the Welsh Secretary David Hunt, as one of the projects "that improve the quality of life for the local communities and which will act as catalysts in promoting the area's development potential to private investors". (ibid.).

According to Mr. P Jane of the Planning Department of Mid Glamorgan County Council, the plan for the development of the Heritage Park has now been changed (Jane, telephone interview,1992). The Barry Sidings site has been excluded from the project, and the next phase of development will concentrate on a family activity centre and the "Underground Experience" - an underground "ride", which, although located just beneath the surface, will provide the visitors with a realistic experience of coal extraction in the Valleys.

Further financial support of £1.8m from the Welsh Office has been obtained (Anon,1992b).

### 5.3.3 Project Assessment

The project is still in development and a thorough evaluation is impossible at this stage. However, as mentioned earlier, both positive and negative views have been expressed by the local authorities. In this section, an assessment of the project is attempted on the basis of its objectives, costs and achievements. An examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership model involved in this project is dealt with in the following section.

An understanding of the special problems and difficulties facing the Rhondda area is essential to the assessment of the project. Rhondda is the most deprived area in the Valleys (Morgan,1992) whilst Taff-Ely, on the other hand, is amongst the relatively "prosperous". Being a deep-sided valley, Rhondda has neither large amount of land for development nor flat areas with good development potential. The area has thus been classified as a "Valley heart", in contrast to Taff-Ely, which is a "Valley mouth". In the recent years, new development has focused on the southern part of Taff-Ely, which contains the Trefforest Industrial Estate, a major source of jobs in the area. This has left the northern part of Taff-Ely and the Rhondda (where the Heritage Park is located) in a relatively disadvantaged

position to compete for new industry.

In addition, one of the major weaknesses of the economy of the area (both Rhondda and Taff-Ely) is the large number of branch factories and the limited number of locally-based large companies. In times of economic difficulties, branch factories are prone to transfer, thereby creating a vulnerable local economy. Therefore, the growth of indigenous industry and diversification of the local economy are particularly important in the area.

With this background, the Rhondda Heritage Park should be viewed as a valuable urban regeneration project. Its tourism orientation will undoubtedly help raise the popularity of the area and begin to reverse the image of the Valleys as being heavily industrialised, declining and generally unattractive. This would help to bring in new industry to the area. In fact, as mentioned earlier, a 52-bedroom hotel with conference and banqueting facilities has already been completed at the site.

The project itself also creates some job opportunities for the local people. In August 1991, 23 people were already employed at the Park, more than half of them full-time. Both the project itself and the tourism it promotes will help to diversify the local economy. However, the number of jobs created so far will have a very marginal impact on this latter consideration. As according to the census published

by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in 1981, there were 17,000 employees in Rhondda Borough and 36,600 in Taff Ely Borough.

From its opening in July 1989, 33,000 visitors had been attracted by September 1991. For the year of 1991, the total number of visitors was 30,000. It is hoped that the 1992 figure will reach 40-45,000 (Jane, telephone interview, 1992). Although the Consultants' forecast of 400,000 visitors by the year 1991 has been unrealistic, and even the target of 60,000 for the financial year 1991/92 was not met, the number of visitors has nevertheless increased year by year. It may also be argued that both the development of the Park (as well as other facilities such as the hotel) and the establishment of its popularity will take time. The potential of the Park as a major tourist attraction in the South Wales Valleys, when completed, should not be underestimated.

The project is perhaps not as cost-effective as an industrial development in money terms, particularly in the early stage, the benefit in image improvement is nevertheless unparalleled. The importance of image improvement is nowhere better stressed than in the Garden Festival (whether it achieves this is another matter). Compared with the Garden Festival, the Heritage Park, with a very modest investment, provides a permanent tourist establishment and therefore an opportunity for the long-term improvement of the image of the area. Furthermore, the



association with the already world-renowned name of Rhondda provides high publicity world-wide at no cost. Also as realised with the previous Garden Festivals (Section 4.4.5), a well-known name is often conducive to attracting private investment.

#### **5.3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of This Example of the Partnership Model**

The strengths of the informal consortium as a partnership model as revealed by this case study are identified as follows:

- a. it is easy to set up and requires limited WDA resources. It is therefore viable for wide application;
- b. often locally initiated, it takes full advantage of the initiation of local communities and local resources. This is particularly important in the regeneration of the Valleys due to the diversity and complexity of the area. The success of the regeneration can be achieved only if the initiation of local communities and local resources are fully utilised.
- c. it promotes partnership, not only between the WDA and local authorities, but also between different local communities or different local authorities. Although the involvement of two local authorities may lead to problems,

it is not inevitable. Furthermore a successful partnership established between local authorities or local communities would not only unite them but also create the spirit of co-operation; and

d. it also has purchasing and VAT advantages, being incorporated within a local authority structure.

The informal consortium, as demonstrated by the Rhondda Heritage Park, reveals the following weaknesses which, if not properly dealt with, may lead to problems:

a. the lack of legal binding subjects the successful development of the project to changes in the political processes and the willingness of the parties involved.

b. the uncertainty and the lack of cohesion may discourage private sector funding and investment;

c. the decision-making process is cumbersome and time consuming;

d. the organisation is not single-minded and well-motivated. Officers and elected members still owe primary allegiance to their own organisations and may not participate wholeheartedly in the project.

On the whole, the informal consortium is still considered a valuable partnership model. Nevertheless, attention should

be given as to its potential weaknesses and precautionary measures should be taken to minimise the damaging effects which may arise. From the study of the Rhondda Heritage Park, the following lessons may be learnt:

a. whenever possible, the involvement of two parties which may have conflicting interests should be avoided. In the case of the Heritage Park, Taff-Ely has already attracted considerable private sector investment, and therefore according to the Borough's development strategy, "the generation of demand through marketing is not regarded as crucial". More emphasis is given to the supply of adequate land (Taff-Ely Borough Council, 1991). However, Rhondda, with little private sector investment, regards marketing as important in its development strategy (Rhondda Borough Council, 1991). The two local authorities thus have different interests in the Heritage Park site, in which the seeds of later conflict may be found. Had only one of the Borough Councils been involved, together with the support of WDA, the project would have been run more smoothly.

b. if two such parties have to be involved, the possible conflicting interests and the potential problems should be identified in advance and measures taken to minimise the difference and maximise the common interests. In the case of the Heritage Park, Taff-Ely councillors might have been convinced at the very beginning that a tourism development helps to diversify its economy and therefore deserves the

support even if the cost-effectiveness in the short-term may not be as good as an industrial development. On the other hand, such a development is important to the Rhondda and a better-off Rhondda is in Taff-Ely's interest because Rhondda people largely turn to Taff-Ely for much of their shopping and other services (May, interview, 1991).

c. although the partnership is in the form of an informal consortium, initial studies on the feasibility of the project should still be realistic. In the case of the Heritage Park, the original forecast of 400,000 visitors by 1991 was grossly over-optimistic. This may well have fuelled the conflict and led to the eventual pull-out of Taff-Ely, since the Borough Council argued that its obligation was based on certain figures which were in the event, not met.

## 5.4 THE "INFORMAL CONSORTIUM" PROJECT (II): ABERTILLERY TOWN CENTRE RENEWAL

### 5.4.1 Background to the Project

Abertillery is seventeen miles from Newport and to the South of Ebbw Vale. Situated in a narrow valley, the town is about eight miles long and half a mile wide and has around 19,000 residents.

Similar to other South Wales Valleys towns, Abertillery has experienced severe economic, environmental and social decline since 1920s as a result of the loss of its traditional mining base. In addition to a high unemployment rate, the decline is also physically evident in the growing number of empty and neglected town centre properties. Abertillery has been singled out as one of the first projects to be taken on by the WDA's Urban Development Department (formerly Urban Renewal Unit), and is included in the Valleys Programme.

In 1988 following an initiative by Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council to seek help in revitalising the town centre, the WDA commissioned a study by consultant URBED (The Urban and Economic Development Group). A report was published in August that year - "Revitalising the Heart of Abertillery" (URBED, 1988). This proposed a strategy for regeneration and suggested an organisation, Abertillery

Action, to co-ordinate the project (see Fig.5.4). Following Blaenau Gwent Borough Council's decision to set up Abertillery Action in December 1988, the first meeting of the partners was held in February 1989 and two months later a Gwent County Council planner was appointed as a part-time Project Officer (Smith,1990).

The regeneration strategy consists of four main elements, or, tasks, ie:

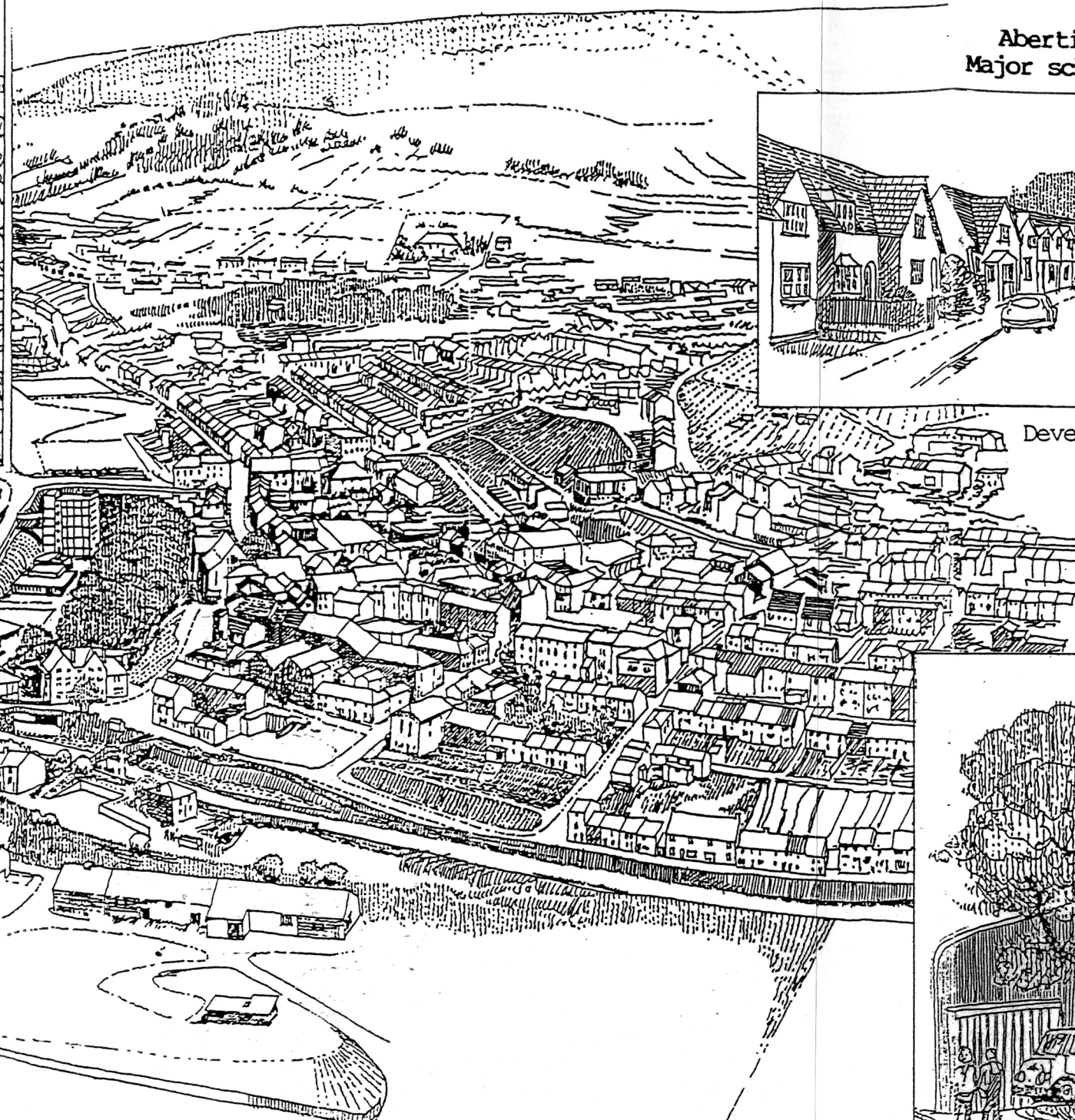
- a. enhancing the town centre;
- a. attracting more visitors;
- c. promoting new jobs; and
- d. broadening the population.

To provide the impetus needed to implement the strategy, 28 proposals are put forward, including a series of "flagship schemes" and a number of "pilot projects". The flagship schemes are designed to give the town a new direction and generate the vision and confidence needed to break the vicious circle of decline (URBED, 1988). Each of the flagship schemes involves large scale investment over a number of years, whilst the pilot projects are both quicker and cheaper to implement. The pilot projects are therefore designed to be launched immediately to create "early wins" and build confidence. They are not fixed in location,

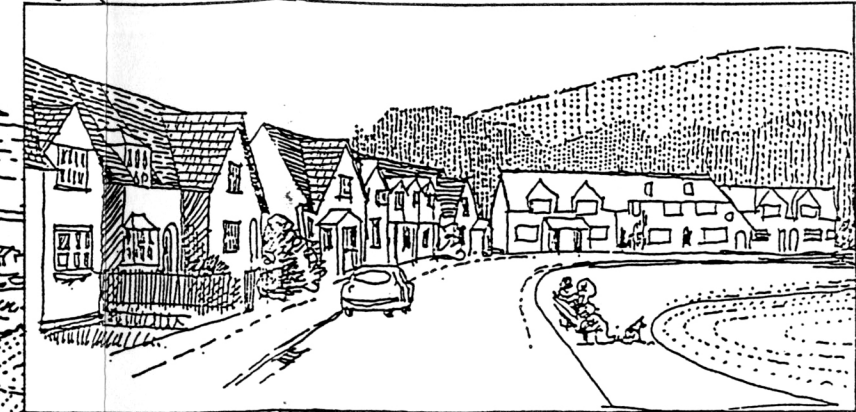
Fig.5.4 Abertillery Town Study



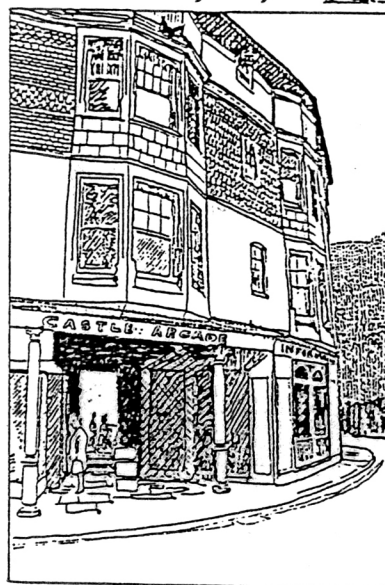
Create a New Market Square



Abertillery Town Centre :  
Major schemes for Regeneration

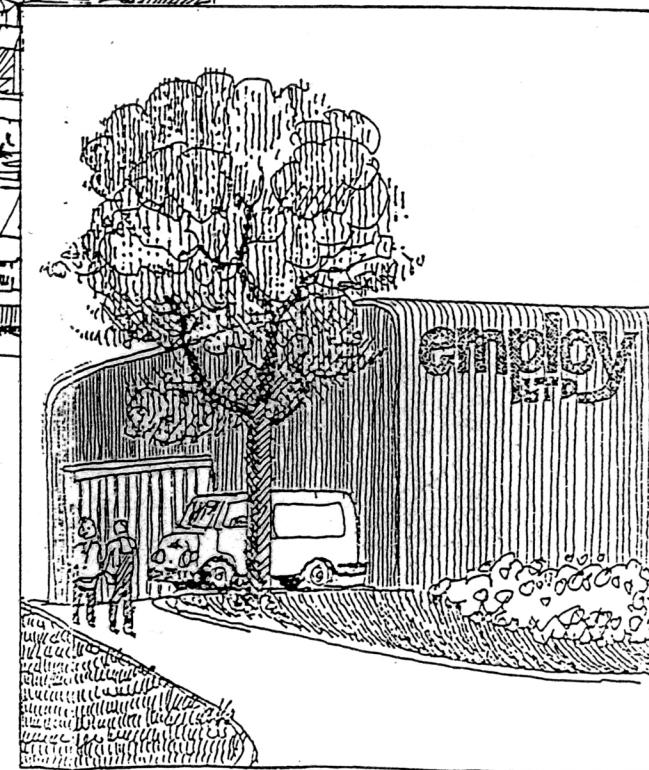


Develop a lakeside Village



Restore Buildings of Merit

A B E R T I L L E R Y  
T O W N S T U D Y



Build an Enterprise Park

Source: The Urban and Economic Development Group, 1988

unlike the flagship schemes, but it is suggested that they also involve continuing efforts over a period of 5-10 years if they are to be successful (URBED,1988).

The four flagship schemes are:

- a. a major new car park to serve the town centre;
- b. a new market place at the heart;
- c. an enterprise park at the gateway; and
- d. a lakeside village on the edge at the site of a former colliery.

Generally, the first two schemes were targeted at the first task, ie, ensuring local people spend more time (and money) in the town by enhancing the town centre. The new car park was designed to improve access for car borne shoppers and the new market place to create a lively place to trade in the town centre. Both aim to stem the decline in the trade of the shops. The third scheme was targeted at the third task of promoting new jobs, whilst the fourth scheme was aimed at broadening the population by providing a balance of housing in a well-designed environment.

Besides the four flagship schemes, there are 24 proposals for pilot projects. One of the most important pilot projects proposed is the re-opening of the passenger line to



Newport for passenger traffic. The line is in good operational condition, as it still serves the steelworks in Ebbw Vale, although considerable investment would be required in terms of new signalling, stations and stock. At the time of the publication of URBED report in 1988, the line was expected to be opened to passengers during the 1992 Garden Festival (though this did not happen). A re-opened railway line would make it easier for visitors to come to Abertillery (including potential visitors) and it would also be easier to expand the resident population and help Abertillery function as a commuter town for Newport and the coastal area over time (URBED, 1988).

#### **5.4.2 Organisation, Progress and Problems**

The organisation for the town centre renewal project is Abertillery Action, which was set up in December 1988 and is an informal consortium, involving the WDA, Gwent County Council, Blaenau Gwent Borough Council and Abertillery Community Council. The part-time Project Officer is responsible for organising and co-ordinating the project.

Being an informal consortium, Abertillery Action has no legal status and no spending nor executive power. It can only influence the spending and the decision-making of the relevant parties.

Since the start of the project, some progress has been made,

including pedestrianisation of some areas of the town centre (see Plate 9 and Plate 10), creation of some new parking places; improvement in traffic routing; surfacing of some streets; and setting up street furniture. Expenditure in the first two years of the project was £470,000 and £840,000 respectively (Smith,1990). Despite this, the progress of the project cannot be said to be satisfactory. The current economic situation has not been conducive to the success of the regeneration and there has been a number of major disappointments in the course of the development of the project.

One has been the abandoning on cost grounds of the re-opening of the railway line. This will almost certainly have a negative effect on the project as a whole. The railway line could have been one of the main factors in putting Abertillery back on the map, attracting both visitors and commuters.

A second disappointment is with the proposed new village, which would have provided the bulk of the new housing. This flagship scheme had all the necessary funding secured but site investigation revealed that the ground conditions were too poor to support the proposed development. The scheme has to be hampered, although it still has financial backing, but is hampered by a distinct lack of flat developable ground in the area. A new site is being sought (Braxter, telephone interview,1992). Since the railway line will not now be re-opened, the success of the scheme had the village



**Abertillery Town Centre: Pedestrianisation Undertaken under Renewal Programme, but Little Evidence of Further Improvements**

been built must be questioned again.

It had been hoped that the enterprise park would be a main source of employment and a catalyst for other firms to grow and move to the area. But it has made little headway, the main obstacle being a lack of funding. Instead, retail development has taken place on the proposed site (ibid.).

The progress of enhancement of the town centre is not promising either. Although the appearance of the town centre streets have been improved, in most cases, nothing has been done to inspire the shop owners to follow suit. There have been very few cases of shop frontage renovation. On the whole, the shops still give the appearance of being run-down and are not in the least welcoming. It is this lack of enthusiasm from shop keepers that results in a continuing impression of dereliction at Abertillery. Furthermore, traders have objected to the proposed siting of the new market in a pedestrianised shopping street, so an alternative location is being investigated (ibid.).

#### **5.4.3 Project Assessment**

Abertillery has been experiencing decline for many years, and it is therefore unrealistic to expect that this can be reversed by a single action, or on a short-time scale. The strategy adopted by Abertillery Action aims to work towards a vision of what the town could become, and to combine investment in the major opportunities (the flagship

schemes), with smaller scale action or pilot projects that "show the way" over a period of 3-5 years.

Another factor which has to be taken into account when assessing the development of the project is the overall climate of the U.K. economy as a whole. At a time when the British economy is at its lowest due to one of the worst recessions in decades, it is also unrealistic to expect a regeneration project to attract a significant amount of private investment. Likewise, any attempt to provide new jobs will be hard to achieve while the rest of the country also suffers from increasing unemployment.

This, however, does not mean that no assessment can be made of the relative merits and weaknesses of the project. The regeneration strategy has been comprehensive, involving actions on a number of fronts simultaneously: physical, economic and social. However, public funding has been very limited whilst private investment even scarcer. The 28 proposals, flagship schemes and pilot projects together, are not well prioritised in terms of funding. The limited funding, unprioritised proposals, plus the fact that the organisation is an informal consortium with no spending and executive power, have inevitably led to a situation where no significant impact has been effected on any of the fronts.

The disappointment at the lack of success of the project has in turn further increased the scepticism of the local

community as to whether any good could come out of it. Such scepticism reduces the community's enthusiasm to support and participate in the regeneration. As a result, the majority of shop keepers did not bother to carry out any renovation, thus impeding the attempt to enhance the town centre.

With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been better if the regeneration had been phased into several stages and the proposals prioritised accordingly. This would have allowed limited resources to be used more efficiently. For example, the first stage could have concentrated on the renovation of the town centre and, most importantly, on ensuring the re-opening of the railway line. For the former, Abertillery Action might have spent more time trying to encourage the participation of local shop keepers in the scheme. This could have involved taking the initiative and actually visiting the retailers, since they seem to have been reluctant to approach the organisation and the relevant bodies. In this way, shop keepers could have been shown how they could be helped by the scheme, and what might happen if they continue to do nothing. Advice about financial help could also have been provided. On the other hand, more public funding might have been concentrated on helping the re-opening of the railway line. The success of the Cardiff to Aberdare line, re-opened in 1988, has shown what can be achieved given sufficient goodwill and financial support.

The Newport to Abertillery line would have helped the town

to attract visitors, particularly during the 1992 National Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale which was close by. It would also have been to the benefit of the Garden Festival as well. More visitors would in turn have encouraged shop keepers to renovate their shops.

Without this first step being successfully realised, the aim of turning Abertillery into more of a commuter town, does seem too adventurous, bearing in mind the present situation of the town.

The second stage could have concentrated on the renovation and redevelopment of the many empty buildings and flats in the town centre. This would have created space for renting for both industrial and residential use. With growing prosperity, demands might be created which would justify the development of an enterprise park and a mixed-tenure "village", which could then be considered the third stage of the regeneration.

Such a step by step development would help to make most efficient use of resources and deliver benefits more quickly. The current strategy recognises the importance of showing "early wins" by devising pilot programmes. However, the many flagship and pilot projects still conflict in utilising the limited resources.

Clearly the re-opening of the railway line is most



important to the regeneration of Abertillery. As discussed in section 4.4.3, it would also have benefited the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival. The failure in achieving this may indicate an important deficiency in the policy of the Valleys regeneration, ie, the lack of partnership at a higher level.

To date, the importance of partnership has been stressed by both the Welsh Office, the WDA and academic observers in the context of individual regeneration projects, ie, the partnership between all the parties involved in the project. However, it is also important to co-ordinate different projects and develop partnership amongst them. The case of the Garden Festival and the Abertillery Action is a clear example of this need.

Both Ebbw Vale and Abertillery are within the boundary of Blaenau Gwent Borough Council and are close to each other. It might be argued that had the two projects been better co-ordinated, ie, had a "partnership of partnerships" existed, maximum benefits would have resulted for both of them. A partnership may help not only in the planning and co-ordination of the projects, but may also help each other in some aspects of the regeneration. For example, with their combined efforts, a re-opening of the railway line might have been achieved which would in turn benefit both of them. The Garden Festival Company may also have paid more attention in publicising Abertillery as an enhancement to its programme of activities and events. Also, the retailing and industrial enterprise park developments at the Ebbw Vale



site and Abertillery might be co-ordinated within a framework.

#### 5.4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of This Example of the Partnership Model

Being of the same partnership pattern, Abertillery and Rhondda Heritage Park have nevertheless some different characteristics. The Heritage Park is largely a single-purpose project, while Abertillery Action is a comprehensive regeneration scheme. The organisation for the Heritage Park is relatively formal while that for Abertillery Action much looser. The two projects reveal some common strengths and weaknesses of the partnership model. But Abertillery also has its special features.

The strengths of the informal consortium as revealed by this project are:

- a. it is easy to set up;
- b. since it involves a number of parties, it helps to publicise the project, and draw resources from each of the parties to use in a general direction, ie the regeneration of the town centre;
- c. it makes the project flexible to local situations and it is easy to incorporate ideas of different parties;

d. although it is not legally binding, it is still widely taken as a "formal" arrangement, and therefore the parties involved do make serious commitment. The acknowledgement of this "formal" arrangement had been expressed in the interview with local authority officer; and

e. in the eyes of local authority officers, it is a mechanism through which funding can be applied from the Welsh Office and the WDA.

The weaknesses of the informal consortium are less apparent in this second case. This is partly due to the lack of involvement of parties with conflicting interests. Nevertheless the following weaknesses are still identified:

a. being a loose organisation, without spending or executive power, it is not easy to prioritise the various schemes and projects or concentrate resources on certain programmes; thus it is not conducive to delivering benefits quickly;

b. the project management is not efficient since the only project officer is part-time and the representatives to the consortium owe their allegiance to their own organisations; and

c. without spending or executive power it is not conducive to attracting the support and participation of the local people.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 WORK ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS STUDY

This research project has focused on study of the regeneration of the South Wales Valleys through partnership between different agencies. The main objectives, as outlined in the first chapter are:

- a. to identify the different types of the Valleys regeneration projects in terms of project characteristics and partnership patterns; and to examine the selected projects representing the typical types;
- b. to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each of the different types of project in the context of the prevailing local conditions;
- c. to assess the possible impact of each project on the regeneration of the Valleys and to propose measures to maximise the benefits; and in the case of the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival, to study the experiences of its predecessors and draw lessons from which the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival may benefit;
- d. to compare and contrast the projects in order to identify the extent to which, and under what circumstances, each different project can play a role in regeneration and

influence the physical and economic development of the area; additionally, in order to establish the prospects for successful policies and partnerships to promote prosperous economic development in the Valleys.

The following work has been accomplished in this study:

a. both the geographical conditions and the historical economic growth and decline of the Valleys have been examined to provide a better understanding of the current "inner city" problems in the Valleys;

b. within the above context, the regeneration efforts made by successive governments have been briefly reviewed, the emphasis being on the WDA's role in the Valleys regeneration and the comprehensive regeneration initiative promoted by the Welsh Office in 1988 - The Valleys Programme;

c. the major partnership models in promoting the Valleys regeneration projects have been identified and four projects representing the various models have been examined as detailed case studies;

d. the first four Garden Festivals in the U.K. were examined to reveal the major strengths and weaknesses of the practice and to propose suggestions for improvements, this is a prelude to, and a basis for the detailed study of Garden Festival Wales, as an example of an Independent Organisation model in the Valleys regeneration; with the

identified special features of this Festival, the benefits which can be realistically expected have been discussed, and suggestions as to how to maximise these benefits have been made; the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership model have also been examined;

e. the Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration project, as an example of a Joint Venture partnership model has been studied; the strengths and weaknesses of the project and of the partnership model have been examined;

f. the Rhondda Heritage Park and Abertillery Town Centre Renewal, as two contrasting examples of the most widely used partnership model, the Informal Consortium, have been studied to identify and examine the strengths and weaknesses of this model of partnership and to suggest measures for improvement.

In this chapter, the main findings and conclusions are presented (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.2). Proposals to improve the effectiveness of the Valleys regeneration projects are also included, both at the level of individual projects and at the level of the Valleys regeneration as a whole. Finally, some suggestions for further research are made.

Table 6.1 Partnership Models in the Regeneration of the South Wales Valleys

| Partnership models       |   | Typical projects   |   | Partnership strengths and weaknesses   |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| Type                     | Features  | Projects   | Major features  | Strengths  | Weaknesses   |
| Independent Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Project run by an independent organisation</li> <li>* Little influence by local communities</li> </ul>       | 1992 National Garden Festival Wales  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Land reclamation and development</li> <li>* Tourist event (temporary)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Quick decision-making</li> <li>* Delivers quick results</li> <li>* Efficient management</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of co-operation with local authorities</li> <li>* Insufficient consideration of local community interests</li> <li>* Long-term success may be uncertain due to lack of local support</li> </ul>                        |
| Joint Venture            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Involves two or more parties, often including the WDA</li> <li>* Arrangements are legally binding</li> </ul> | South Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Land reclamation and development</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Best use of local resources</li> <li>* Stability due to legally binding arrangements: attractive to potential investors</li> <li>* Capable of attracting local community support</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Less easy to set up than informal consortium</li> <li>* Unsuitable for wide application</li> </ul>  |
| Informal Consortium      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Involves two or more parties</li> <li>* Arrangements are not legally binding</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Rhondda Heritage Park</li> <li>* Abertillery Town Centre Renewal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Tourism establishment (permanent)</li> <li>* Town centre renewal</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Easy to set up and suitable for wide application</li> <li>* Best use of local resources</li> <li>* Conducive to publicising the project and drawing support for it</li> <li>* Conducive to promoting partnership amongst local communities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Project development subject to changes</li> <li>* Project uncertainty may be unattractive to investors</li> <li>* Decision-making likely to be cumbersome</li> <li>* Project management unlikely to be efficient</li> </ul> |

Table 6.2 DETAILS OF THE PROJECTS STUDIED

| PROJECT                    | GARDEN FESTIVAL<br>WALES  | SOUTH LLANELLI<br>COASTAL AREA  | RHONDDA<br>HERITAGE PARK  | ABERTILLERY TOWN<br>CENTRE RENEWAL   |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| BEGINNING<br>OF<br>PROJECT | 1987  | 1990  | 1988  | 1988   |
| DURATION                   | FROM 1987-90:<br>FESTIVAL<br>CONSTRUCTION<br>AND OPERATION;<br>FROM 1993:<br>AFTER-USE<br>DEVELOPMENT<br>EXPECTED | PHASED OVER<br>A 20-YEAR<br>PERIOD  | SCHEDULED FOR<br>COMPLETION<br>IN THE<br>MID-1990'S                                 | DIFFERENT<br>SCHEMES WERE<br>PHASED IN<br>SHORT-TERM,<br>MEDIUM-TERM<br>AND LONG-TERM<br>RESPECTIVELY                  |
| RECLAIMED<br>SITE (ACRE)   | 200   | 600   | 89  | NOT<br>APPLICABLE  |
| EXPENDITURE                | \$60m,<br>AMONG WHICH<br>ABOUT \$10m<br>FOR LAND<br>RECLAMATION   | ESTIMATED COST:<br>\$30m PUBLIC MONEY<br>TO LEVER ABOUT<br>\$300m PRIVATE<br>INVESTMENT;<br>FROM 1990-91<br>\$10m WAS SPENT<br>IN LAND PURCHASE,<br>RECLAMATION,<br>INFRASTRUCTURE<br>AND LANDSCAPING,<br>ANOTHER \$3m WAS<br>SPENT ON NEW<br>LINK ROAD | FIRST PHASE FROM<br>1988-89: \$3m;<br>FROM 1988 THE<br>SUMMER OF 1991:<br>\$4.4m    | ABOUT \$12m<br>EXPENDITURE<br>EXPECTED OVER<br>A 3-YEAR PERIOD<br>FROM 1989;<br>IN 1989:\$470,000<br>IN 1990:\$840,000 |
| JOB<br>CREATION            | TEMPORARY JOBS:<br>ABOUT 2000;<br>EXPECTED PERMANENT<br>JOBS: 1000  | NOT YET KNOWN   | BY 1991:<br>23 PERMANENT JOBS   | NOT YET KNOWN  |
| VISITOR<br>ATTRACTION      | 2 MILLION BETWEEN<br>MAY-OCTOBER<br>1992  | NOT<br>APPLICABLE   | BY SEPTEMBER 1991:<br>33 000<br>IN 1991: 30,000<br>IN 1992 (EXPECTED):<br>40-45,000 | UNQUANTIFIED<br>INCREASE IN<br>SHOPPERS  |

## 6.2 GARDEN FESTIVAL WALES AND LESSONS FROM ITS PREDECESSORS

Garden Festival Wales has been one of the biggest projects in promoting the Valleys regeneration, and had four predecessors from which to learn.

Examination of the first four Garden Festivals has revealed that two confusions widely exist with regard to the nature and benefits of Garden Festivals: firstly, whilst having been promoted as urban regeneration projects, they are in fact more of a tourist event; secondly, whilst the image effect has been widely taken as a major benefit, the image of the Festival event and the image of the host area are often confused.

The current practice of Garden Festivals often has the weaknesses of ambiguous objectives, inappropriately allocated expenditures between the Festival event and the land reclamation and environmental and infrastructure improvement of the site and its surroundings, and insufficient co-ordination in land use planning and infrastructure provision.

Fundamental reforms would be needed to overcome all these weaknesses. It would be better if the current Festival practice were changed into either a much longer Festival event or simply a land reclamation and environmental improvement scheme, depending on local conditions.



However, if the suggested fundamental reforms are not possible the long-term benefits can be maximised by incorporating, wherever possible, the following features:

- a. a close co-operation of the Festival company and local authorities;
- b. a site in public ownership;
- c. an overall regeneration scheme for the local area;
- d. an early completion of after-use strategy; and
- e. a promotion of public-private partnership.

As far as Garden Festival Wales is concerned, it has some special features which might affect the long-term development of the Festival site. These include a hillside setting, a conflicting expectation in relation to the benefits to the host area and the Valleys as a whole, and a traditionally weak private sector presence in the Valleys.

Based on the lessons learnt from the first four Festivals and the recognition of the special features associated with Garden Festival Wales, the following measures are recommended for maximising the long-term benefit of Festival Wales:

- a. **improve accessibility:** if significant development is to be secured, it is essential to improve access conditions both inside and outside the Festival site. In particular, the importance of the CWM bypass in this respect has been noted previously. Failure to achieve such improvements within the near future will impose a significant brake on the momentum for development;
- b. **promote partnership between the WDA, local authorities and other public and private agencies;**
- c. **make use of the Festival name:** as experience from Stoke-on-Trent has shown (see section 4.2) this can act as a useful marketing tool in connection with the after-use development of the site;
- d. **maintain as much as possible of the Festival landscaping, buildings and features:** this will slow down the fading of the image effect after the closure of the Festival; this in turn will maintain the value of the site both as a public amenity and as a catalyst for long-term development;
- e. **maximise the spin-off benefits of the Festival:** for this purpose, further off-site development and environmental improvements in the vicinity of the site should be encouraged.

### 6.3 OTHER CASE STUDIES OF PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS IN THE REGENERATION OF THE VALLEYS

#### 6.3.1 South Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration

This project is a joint venture between Llanelli Borough Council and the WDA, and the first major regeneration scheme of its kind in which the WDA has participated directly. The establishment of the partnership and the direct involvement of the WDA depended on three main reasons: a good working relationship between the Borough and the WDA existing before the project; the majority of the site being owned by the Borough; and the area being large enough to embrace a complex development.

Half way through now, the project has made some considerable progress and appears to be promising. This is partly attributed to the substantial funding from the WDA and the strengths of the partnership. Both this project and the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival are publicly-funded, involving large scale land reclamation and environmental improvement as a means to attract private investment. In the Llanelli project, land development to attract private investment has been more specifically targeted, and consequently, infrastructure provision and improvement are better realised resulting in greater competitiveness of the site in attracting private development than the Garden Festival site.

Garden Festival Wales has wider objectives but additional benefits from the considerably greater cost seem to be limited. The Llanelli project is therefore considered to be more cost-effective than Garden Festival Wales.

### 6.3.2 Rhondda Heritage Park

This project is tourism-oriented and its organisation is an informal consortium involving, initially, five parties (Mid Glamorgan County Council, Rhondda Borough Council, Taff-Ely Borough Council, the WDA and the Wales Tourist Board).

Given the relatively disadvantageous position of the local area to compete for new industry and the lack of indigenous industry and diversification of the local economy, the project is considered to be valuable and worth the support of public funding. It may not be as cost-effective in money terms in its early stages as an industrial development, but nevertheless it has some considerable strengths:

- a. its tourism orientation will undoubtedly help market the area and improve on its negative image as a dirty industrial locality, and therefore help bring in new industry;
- b. after completion of the project, a growing number of visitors is likely to be attracted and tourism expenditure will benefit the local people;

c. as a tourism project, it helps diversify the local economy; and

d. it makes full and efficient use of one of the important local resources: the world-renowned name "Rhondda", which provides high publicity world-wide at no cost.

### 6.3.3 Abertillery Town Centre Renewal

This is also an informal consortium project, although other characteristics of the project are different from the Rhondda Heritage Park. The organisation for this project appears to be looser than for the Heritage Park, whilst, many more programmes and schemes are involved.

To date, the progress of the project has not been found to be encouraging. This is partly attributed to the current economic situation, but some other causes have also been recognised. These include:

a. lack of prioritisation for the many flagship schemes and pilot projects proposed; the regeneration should have been divided into different stages in order to make more efficient use of limited resources and to effect some regeneration impact;

b. lack of effective action by the project organisation in mobilising support and participation from the local

community;

c. lack of co-ordination and partnership at a higher level between this project and others, particularly Garden Festival Wales; this has led to the failure in re-opening the railway line, which is vitally important to the success of the Abertillery renewal and also to the successful after-use of the Garden Festival Wales site.

#### **6.4 PARTNERSHIP IN PROMOTING THE VALLEYS REGENERATION PROJECTS**

##### **6.4.1 Partnership Models and Typical Projects**

The following partnership models are identified as the major ones adopted in the Valleys:

- a. **Independent Organisation:** (e.g. Garden Festival Wales);
- b. **Joint Venture:** (e.g. Llanelli Coastal Area Regeneration);
- c. **Informal Consortium:** (e.g. Rhondda Heritage Park and Abertillery Town Centre Renewal).

Each of these partnership models has its strengths and weaknesses, discussed in Section 6.4.3 and summarised in Table 6.1. However, they share some common characteristics

as discussed below.

#### **6.4.2 Common Characteristics of the Valleys Partnerships**

Despite the thrust of Government policy in terms of the constitution of the partnership approach, the private sector's level of activity in the Valleys is low. Consequently, the public sector generally plays a leading role in the various partnerships, and the WDA in particular is commonly involved. The public sector usually initiates and manages the scheme and provides the broad development context within which the private sector makes its contribution. This often takes the form of land assembly and preparation, the provision of infrastructure and the provision of resources to attract participation by the private sector.

Depending on the degree of the private sector's involvement in the further development of the land prepared by the public sector, the partnerships involved in promoting area-specific projects in the Valleys can be divided into two categories:

- a. a public partnership which provides a framework in the form of land preparation and infrastructure provision, and which then invites developers to acquire and develop sites; and

b. a public partnership which provides the framework but which also takes the main role in implementing the development of the project, with a more limited private sector involvement.

#### **6.4.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Independent Organisation as a Partnership Model**

Partnership between the WDA and local authorities or the project organisers is weak in an Independent Organisation. As revealed by Garden Festival Wales, this model has the following strengths:

a. being independent, it is generally quicker in decision-making and in delivering results;

b. as a single-purpose company, its management can be expected to involve itself whole-heartedly in the project and therefore improve the efficiency of operation.

The weaknesses are:

a. local authorities have little direct influence on decision-making; implementation may therefore deviate from the benefits to the local communities and potentially could lose the support and participation of the local people;

b. the lack of co-ordination with local authorities may lead to difficulties over infrastructure provision by the



local authorities and therefore affect the short-term and/or the long-term development of the project.

#### **6.4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Joint Venture as a Partnership Model**

As revealed by the Llanelli Joint Venture, this model has the following strengths:

- a. being a partnership between the WDA and local authorities, it enables the best use to be made of the former's local knowledge and the latter's financial and technical competence; both are vital to the success of a regeneration scheme;
- b. the arrangement being legally binding, it ensures that the project is not subject to any changes of political power or the willingness of local officers. This injects confidence into potential private investors with regard to the future success of the project and helps to sustain the support and enthusiasm of the local communities;
- c. the projects promoted by this model of partnership normally have an explicit focus, and this avoids any possible conflict in objectives and leads to a more efficient use of resources.

The main weaknesses identified lie in its formality. It is

not as easy to set up as an informal consortium. Additionally, the model is only likely to be adopted for relatively large projects and in a limited number of local areas.

#### **6.4.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Informal Consortium as a Partnership Model**

As revealed in the Rhondda Heritage Park and Abertillery Action, the informal consortium as a partnership has the following strengths:

- a. it is easy to set up and requires limited WDA resources; it is therefore viable for wide application;
- b. being locally initiated, it takes full advantage of the initiative of local communities and local resources; this is particularly important in the regeneration of the Valleys due to the diversity and complexity of the area;
- c. by involving a number of parties, it helps to publicise the project and draw support; it makes the project sensitive to local situations and to the ideas of different parties;
- d. it promotes partnerships, not only between the WDA and local authorities, but also between different local communities; a successful partnership helps to create the spirit of mutual help and co-operation.

The partnership model has the following weaknesses:

- a. the lack of legal binding exposes the successful implementation of the project to changes in the political processes and the willingness of the parties involved;
- b. being a loose organisation, the decision-making process is likely to be cumbersome;
- c. often without spending or executive power, it is not conducive to attract the support and participation of the local people and private sector;
- d. project managers are often appointed - if appointed at all - on a part-time basis and they may still owe primary allegiance to their own organisations and may not, therefore, participate objectively in the project.

#### **6.5 PROMOTION OF PARTNERSHIP AT A HIGHER LEVEL: A PROPOSAL**

Partnership has been promoted in individual projects in the Valleys, frequently involving the WDA. Such partnerships between the WDA and local communities are advantageous because they can make the best use of local resources and local knowledge of the communities together with the financial and technical expertise of the Agency.

However, there has been a lack of partnership at a higher level, ie partnership amongst different projects. Such partnership is important. Currently projects are largely isolated. Isolated projects, however well-intentioned, are usually too small to "turn the tide" in the decline. A partnership amongst projects can increase the impact of the projects and make more efficient use of resources.

For example, as pointed out in Chapter 5, a partnership could have been established between Garden Festival Wales and Abertillery Action. Both of these projects are within the boundary of the same Borough Council. With their combined efforts, the re-opening of the railway line from Newport to Abertillery might have been realised, which would have been of benefit to both schemes. Also, the Garden Festival Company could have made some attempt to publicise Abertillery which is so close, and better co-ordination and co-operation might have been achieved between the two projects in the retailing and business park development. Without such partnership, there is a risk of their competing for the limited private and public resources as well as a risk of over-supply of accommodation and basic infrastructure.

Such partnership at a higher level is possible in the Valleys because of the considerable involvement of the WDA. The WDA is in an ideal position to co-ordinate different projects and promote partnerships amongst them.

To facilitate the promotion of such partnerships, an overall plan for the regeneration of the Valleys is needed. The current Valleys Programme, although comprehensive and aiming at the promotion of partnership, is still largely a collection of individual projects. It lacks a long-term view of the Valleys regeneration. It also lacks consideration as to the interactive effects between projects, such as the mutually enhancing image effect of Garden Festival Wales and Abertillery Town Centre renewal and the competition for limited public resources, private sector investment and potential consumer market between them. Consequently, it lacks guidance for co-operation and co-ordination among projects.

In general, projects are initiated as isolated, individual efforts without much consideration to the Valleys regeneration as a whole. A comprehensive study of the problems, potential and resources of both individual Valleys areas and the Valleys as a whole should be conducted by the WDA in order to draw guidelines for the Valleys regeneration. Under such guidelines, projects promoted in specific areas should not only best serve local regeneration but also serve the overall aim of regenerating the whole of the Valleys.

For example, such an overall regeneration plan might have resulted in a better arrangement of regeneration effort at Ebbw Vale. Instead of the Garden Festival, a joint venture,

similarly to that at Llanelli, could have been adopted at Ebbw Vale. With the reclaimed land and improved environment, some private investment could be attracted there. In any event, the money saved from the Festival event could be invested in the industrial, commercial or other development of the site. This would, to a higher degree, secure the successful "after-use" development of the site. Such long-term benefits are clearly more important to the depressed local communities than the short-term glamour of the high-profile Festival with the elusive image improvement effect.

On the other hand, an alternative location for a Festival could have been an area with better accessibility, possibly a Valley's mouth area. These tend to be relatively prosperous and could better serve the objective of the Festival to "show off" and dispel the poor image of the Valleys.

## **6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK**

A first step in further research work is the following up of the case studies conducted in this work. As the projects develop, a better appraisal can be achieved with further evidence of achievements. For example, at the time of writing, Garden Festival Wales has just ended and the after-use of the site has hardly started. The most important issue, long-term benefits, cannot be properly assessed in the research in terms of measuring performance and

effectiveness against key indicators of the type identified in section 1.3.

Perhaps of greater significance would be research on the promotion of partnerships at a higher level and an overall regeneration plan. The research should study the feasibility and necessity of such partnerships in further detail, and the possible models suitable for the above.

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**APPENDIX I:**

**Local Authorities within the Valleys Initiative Area**

**Source: The Welsh Office**

**PROGRAMME FOR THE VALLEYS: BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

**COUNTY OF DYFED**

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF DINEFWR COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Ammanford

Betws

Part of the Community of Cwmamman comprising the Community Wards of Gienig and of Pistillwyd

Part of the Community of Llandybie comprising the Community Wards of Penygroes and of Saron

That part of the Community of Quarter Bach which falls outside the Brecon Beacons National Park

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF LLANELLI COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Llanedi

Llanon

Pontyberem

Part of the Community of Llanelli Rural comprising the Community Wards of Felinfoel, Glyn and Swiss Valley

Part of the Community of Llangennech that lies to the north of the Llangennach By-pass (A4138)

**COUNTY OF GWENT**

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT, COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Abertillery

Beaufort

Brynmawr

Cwm

Ebbw Vale

Llanhilleth

Nantyglo and Blaina

Tredegar

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF ISLWYN, COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Abercarn

Argoed

Blackwood

Cefn Fforest

Crosskeys

Crumlin

Newbridge

Pengam

Penmaen

Pontllanfraith

Ynysddu

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF TORFAEN, COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Abersychan

Blaenavon

Panteg

Pen Tranch

Pontymoile

Part of the Community of Trevethin, comprising the Community Ward of Trevethin

**COUNTY OF MID GLAMORGAN**

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF CYNON VALLEY COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Aberaman

Abercynon

Aberdare

Cwmbach

Llwydcoch

Mountain Ash

Penrhiwceiber

Pen-y-Waun

Rhigos

Ynysybwl and Coed-y-Cwm

Part of the Community of Hirwaun comprising the Community Ward of Hirwaun

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF MERTHYR TYDFIL COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Bedlinog

Cyfarthfa

Dowlais

Gurnos

Merthyr Vale

Park

Penydarren

Town

Treharris

Troed-y-Rhiw

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF OGWR COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Llangynwyd Middle

Maesteg

Ogmore Valley

Part of the Community of Garw Valley comprising the Community Wards of Blaengarw, Llangeinor and Pontycymmer.

**ALL OF THE BOROUGH OF RHONDDA**

**PART OF THE DISTRICT OF RHYMNEY VALLEY COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Aber Valley

Bargoed

Caerphilly

Darren Valley

Gelligaer

Llanbradach

Maesycwmmwr

Nelson

New Tredegar

Penyrheol

Rhymney

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF TAFF ELY COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Pontypridd

Part of the Community of Gilfach Goch comprising the Community Wards of Garden Village and of Gilfach Goch.

Part of the Community of Llantrisant comprising the Community Wards of Beddau and of Tyn-y-Nant and of part of the Community Wards of Talbot Green and Llantrisant Town lying to the north of a line that runs from the Llantrisant Community boundary at Ynysallan (NGR ST0 3428457) and thence along the A4119 Country Road, in a generally south-easterly direction for approximately 1.8km to the roundabout at NGR ST0 4358309. Then, from the aforementioned roundabout, in an easterly direction along the A437 County Road for approximately 1.2km to the bridge carrying the mineral railway at NGR ST0 5478301. The boundary then follows the mineral railway in a north-easterly direction for approximately 0.7km, until it meets the Beddau Community Ward boundary at NGR ST0 5708357.

Part of the Community of Llantwit Fardre comprising the Community Wards of Church Village, Llantwit Fardre and of Tonteg.

Part of the Community of Taffs Well comprising the Community Ward of Nantgarw.

Part of the Community of Tonyrefail comprising the Community Wards of Coedely, Collena, Penrhiwfer, Tylcha and of Tynybryn.

**COUNTY OF WEST GLAMORGAN**

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF LLIW VALLEY COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Cilybebyll

Clydach

Cwmlllynfell

Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen

Mawr

Pontardawe

Pontardulais

Pont Lliw

Ystralyfera

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF NEATH COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Blaengwrach

Blaenholdelan

Clyne

Crynant

Dyfryn Clydach

Glynneath

Onllwyn

Pelenna

Resolven

Seven Sisters

Tonna

**PART OF THE BOROUGH OF PORT TALBOT COMPRISING THE COMMUNITIES OF:-**

Bryn

Cwmavon

Glyncorrwg

**PART OF THE CITY OF SWANSEA COMPRISING THE COMMUNITY OF:-**

Birchgrove

**COUNTY OF POWYS**

Part of the Borough of Brecknock comprising those parts of the Communities of Tawe Uchaf and of Ystradgynlais that are not included in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

## APPENDIX II:

### PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH:

1. The Regeneration of South Wales: Into the Valleys, Estates Gazette, October 19th 1991
2. Abertillery Action, Wales, Urban Development Information Service, A89, The Planning Exchange
3. Fruits from the Garden? Town & Country Planning, February 1992
4. Urban Renewal in Britain, Foreign Urban Planning, December 1991 (in Chinese)
5. The Valleys: Aspects of Regeneration, a paper to the seminar "How Green is My Valley?", November 1991, the Polytechnic of Wales (Proceeding to be published 1992)
6. Reforming the Garden Festival, Planning 962 April 3rd 1992

### **APPENDIX III:**

Organisations and individuals who have been interviewed in connection with this project:

**Welsh Office:** Jasper Roberts, Alison Jackson

**Welsh Development Agency:** David Paget, Alan Nicholl,  
Richard Essex, Martin Hall, Richard Braxter

**Mid Glamorgan County Council:** Martin Hooker, Philip Jane

**Taff Ely Borough Council:** Raymond Pearce

**Rhondda Borough Council:** Graham May

**Llanelli Borough Council:** David Priest

**Gwent County Council:** Paul Wellington (project officer of Abertillery Action)

**Blaenau Gwent Borough Council:** Mark Holland, Ged McHugh

**Islwyn Borough Council:** Gillian Thomas/on behalf of the  
Heads of the Valleys Standing Conference, Mr. Davy

**Merseyside Development Corporation:** Graham Trewhella

**Glasgow City Council:** Mr Turnbull

**Gateshead Borough Council:** Mr Barford, Ron Young

**Stoke-on-Trent City Council:** Mr. Barley

**Garden Festival Wales:** Graham Russell, Ceri Thomas, Graham Rowland

**Rhondda Heritage Park:** Andrew Hood

**Chapman Warren:** Lyn Powell

**Wyn Thomas + Partners:** Paul Vining

**Drivers Jonas:** Nigel Smith, Alison Nimmo

**David Preece and Partners:** David Preece

**J P Sturge:** Robert Croydon